Vision and Presence:

Seeing the Buddha in the Early Buddhist and Pure Land Traditions

Thesis

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Abstract

The opportunity to see and be in the presence of the Buddha was of paramount importance to the Buddhist faithful. While the Buddha Śākyamuni was still alive, this represented a chance to hear his teaching and, hopefully, progress along the path to Buddhist enlightenment. However, even after the death of the Buddha, the desire to see and be in the presence of the Buddha continued, and even intensified. In this study I explore the doctrinal developments and beliefs of the early Buddhist, Mahāyāna, and Pure Land traditions that justified this continued belief in the possibility of seeing and being in the presence of the Buddha.

My approach to this topic is interdisciplinary, and brings to bear evidence from the Buddhist doctrinal, conceptual, and art historical traditions. The doctrinal developments discussed in this study that supported the belief in the possibility of seeing and being in the presence of the Buddha after Śākyamuni's *parinirvāṇa* include the three-body (*trikāya*) doctrine and the belief in multiple contemporaneous Buddhas residing in their respective Buddha-lands (*buddhakṣetra*). These developments were informed by the glorification of the Buddha as perfect in wisdom and morality, which was expressed in early Buddhist literature by attributing to the Buddha lists of exemplary properties, or epithets, as well as the thirty-two major physical marks (*lakṣaṇa*) of a great man (*mahāpuruṣa*).

This glorification of the Buddha also played a seminal role in the development of meditative visualization techniques centered on the Buddha, and especially the technique of "Buddha recollection" (*buddhānusmṛti*). In this study I explore the historical development of "Buddha recollection," as well as the closely related concepts of "seeing the Buddha" (*buddhadarśana*) and "Buddha contemplation" (*guānfó* 觀佛), from their origins in the Indian Buddhist tradition through the Chinese Pure Land tradition centered on Amitābha Buddha.

Finally, icons in the Buddhist tradition play an important role in the Buddhist tradition as supports for meditative visualization and "living" embodiments of the Buddha. Buddha images are brought to life through a ritual consecration process centered on an eye-opening ceremony, which, according to the Indian religious tradition, enables them to serve as objects of devotion (*bhakti*), and to bestow the "auspicious glance" (*darśana*) that is central to Indian religions' devotional practices. Despite the contentious art-historical theory that asserts that there was an early "aniconic period" during which no figural images of the Buddha were made, the art-historical evidence actually suggests a continuity between pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Indian beliefs about the role and function of religious icons. In any case, in the Buddhist tradition icons came to be entrusted with carrying on the mission of the Buddha, and iconography has played a prominent role in Buddhist practice. Therefore, the Buddhist iconographic tradition is drawn on in this study because it is particularly illustrative of the Buddhist tradition's understanding of visualization and the nature of the presence of the Buddha.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The English translations of the primary sources consulted in this study are referenced in the notes by the following abbreviations, which are generally followed by numerical references to subdivisions of the work (i.e., part, chapter, section, etc.), if applicable. This should help the reader to locate the citation regardless of which version of the text they consult. Information to the right of the colon, below and in the notes, refers to the English translations consulted for this study, which can be found listed under "Primary Sources in English Translation" in the Bibliography.

AJ	*Ānlè jí* 安樂集: Shibata.
AN	*Aṅguttaranikāya*: *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*.
BS	*Bānzhōu sānmèi jīng* 般舟三昧經; also known by the Sanskrit title, *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*: Harrison and McRae.
DA	*Dhammapada aṭṭhakathā*: Buddhaghoṣa, *Buddhist Legends*.
DN	*Dīghanikāya*: *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*.
FJ	*Fóguó jì* 佛國記: Faxian.
GW	*Guān Wúliàngshòu jīng* 觀無量壽經; also known by the abbreviated title *Guān jīng* 觀經, and the reconstructed Sanskrit title *Amitāyurdhyānasūtra*): Inagaki
JL	*Wúliàngshòu jīng yōubōtíshe yuànshēng jì* 無量壽經優波提舍願生偈; also known by the shorter appellation, *Jìngtǔ lùn* 浄土論, and by the reconstructed Sanskrit title *Sukhāvatīvyūhōpadeśa*: Kiyota
LS	(Longer) *Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra*: Gómez.
SN	*Saṃyuttanikāya*: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*.
SS	*Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選択本願念仏集; abbreviated as *Senchaku shū* 選択集: Hōnen.
Vm	*Jiětuōdào lún* 解脫道論; more commonly known by the reconstructed Pāli title *Vimuttimagga*: Upatissa.
Vs	*Visuddhimagga*: Buddhaghoṣa, *The Path of Purification*.

WLZ *Wúliàngshòu jīng yōubōtíshě yuànshēng jì zhù* 無量壽經優波提舍願生偈註; abbreviated as *Wǎngshēng lùn zhù* 往生論註: Corless.

XJ *Dàtáng xīyù jì* 大唐西域記; abbreviated as *Xīyù jì* 西域記: Xuanzang.

INTRODUCTION

Subject

The opportunity to see the Buddha has been considered a rare and especially momentous experience among the Buddhist faithful since the time of Śākyamuni Buddha. If we understand 'seeing' to simply indicate meeting the Buddha, being in his presence, hearing his teaching, and potentially gaining an audience with him, this phenomenon is perfectly understandable and calls for no elaborate theoretical justification. However, in the Mahāyāna tradition,[1] in particular, the desire to see the Buddha continued, and is widely consider to have intensified, after Śākyamuni's death.[2] For those not fortunate enough to have lived during his approximately four-and-a-half decade long teaching career, the desire for personal contact with the Buddha was especially pointed. This is evident not only in the desire to see the Buddha, but also in the desire to make pilgrimages to sites that he visited during his life, and to be in the proximity of the relics of the Buddha.

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[1] There is some contention over the use of this term to differentiate two entirely distinct Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions. In this study, the term Mahāyāna need only be understood to designate those Buddhist traditions that emphasize the bodhisattva path and its vow to save all sentient beings, and that posit the simultaneous existence of multiple buddhas presiding over their respective buddha fields.

[2] Śākyamuni is traditionally said to have lived for eighty years, but the precise dates of his life are uncertain. Generally, his life is dated backward from the reign of the Indian king, Aśoka (reigned from ca. 268 BCE), but there are disagreements concerning how far back to date it. Scholars have traditionally dated his death to 468 BCE, but it has been suggested that this should be revised to a year closer to 400 BCE, if not later; see Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 9-10.

The belief that it was still possible to see and be in the presence of the Buddha in spite of his already having passed away, which arose among the Buddhist faithful after the Buddha's death, demanded justification in Buddhist theory, doctrine, and practice. The fact that the Buddha was no longer present physically necessitated a new understanding of the nature of his presence, as well as a new understanding of how this could be made accessible to the Buddhist faithful. The doctrinal redefinitions of the nature and presence of the Buddha were not necessarily solely inspired by the desire to see the Buddha, but, one objective of this study is to demonstrate that the desire to see and be in the presence of the Buddha is integrally related to other Buddhist doctrinal and philosophical developments, and not a peripheral pious aspiration.

A Typology of 'Seeing the Buddha'

To begin our analysis, it may be useful to delineate the different ways that it is considered possible to see the Buddha (or Buddhas) in the Mahāyāna tradition. For the purposes of framing the topic of this study, I group them into the following two categories:

1. a) Seeing the Buddha during his life in this world (for the present historical era, this means Śākyamuni in Jambudvīpa, the terrestrial realm where humans reside according to Buddhist cosmology)

   b) Seeing the Buddha in an extra-terrestrial, paradisal realm (e.g., Amitābha[3] (or Amitāyus) Buddha in his Pure Land of Sukhāvatī)

[3] The Buddha Amitābha, whose name means "measureless light," is also referred to by the name Amitāyus, or "measureless life." Jan Nattier's analyses of the earliest Chinese translations that refer to this Buddha, which call him by the abbreviated transliteration *Āmítuó* 阿彌陀, demonstrate that this name was more likely the result of a phonetic elision in the pronunciation of Amitābha, rather than Amitāyus. And the later Chinese translation, *Wúliàng* 無量 ("limitless"), is likely the result of a misunderstanding of this abbreviation as being a transliteration of the Sanskrit *amita* ("limitless"). Though the name Amitāyus can

2. a) Seeing the Buddha via visualization

   b) Seeing the Buddha via icons

The items grouped under number one are alike in that seeing the Buddha is the result of being in the actual presence of the Buddha. *1a* refers to seeing the living Śākyamuni Buddha in the same sense in which we spoke about it to begin this study. This possibility is foreclosed to the Buddhist faithful in this world until the birth of the next Buddha, Maitreya, whom we will not be discussing in this study. *1b* is similar to *1a*, except that it involves the very important distinction that seeing the Buddha takes place in a paradisal realm, rather than in the present world, and only after the death and subsequent rebirth of the Buddhist devotee. The items grouped under number two are alike in that the ability to see the Buddha does not necessarily entail his actual presence. Rather, they are techniques for re-creating the presence of the Buddha.

In this study, we will primarily be discussing the items listed under number two as a means of seeing the Buddha, as described in number one. Depending on the context, all of these items can be construed as means or ends in their own right. For example, the purpose of seeing the Buddha is generally to hear his teaching and attain enlightenment, or else receive a prediction of enlightenment. And, on the other hand, attaining a mental visualization of the Buddha is often the goal of meditative practice, and seeing icons may

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be found in Indian language texts, its Chinese equivalent, *Wúliàngshòu* 無量壽 ("limitless life"), was used much more frequently in Chinese translations than in the original Indian language texts. Nattier attributes this tendency to a cultural preference on the part of the Chinese. Because Amitābha is believed to be the original and more prevalent form of the name of this Buddha in the original Indian texts, for convenience's sake, I will use this name throughout this study. (see Nattier, Jan, "The Names of Amitābha/Amitāyus in Early Chinese Buddhist Translations," Parts 1-2, *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 9 (Mar., 2006): 183-99; 10 (Mar., 2007): 359-94).

be the goal of making pilgrimages. These latter aspects of the experience of seeing the Buddha will not be discussed in this study.

Scope, Methodology, and Previous Scholarship

The focus of this study is the desire to see and be in the presence of the Buddha from the time of the Śākyamuni Buddha to the development of the Pure Land tradition. Specifically, we will look at how this desire was elaborated in Buddhist doctrine, philosophy and practice after the death of Śākyamuni, as evidenced in Buddhist texts, meditative techniques, and art. From the perspective of Buddhist doctrine, the development most pertinent to this study is the extraordinary glorification of the Buddha that occurred after his death, examples of which can be found in the earliest Buddhist texts. The formulaic lists enumerating the Buddha's perfections of knowledge and morality found in these texts were not understood merely in terms of abstract qualities that the Buddha possessed, but also as the bases for the re-conceptualization of the Buddha's "bodily" nature and presence in the world. This re-conceptualization allowed for the belief that the Buddha possessed more than one kind of "body" through which his presence could be manifested. In parallel, it came to be believed that more than one Buddha could exist at the same time in different world-systems; thus allowing for the possibility that a Buddha could currently exist in another world-system.

This new understanding of the Buddha opened up new horizons for Buddhist practice as well. In particular, the practice of "Buddha recollection," which was originally based on the same lists of the Buddha's perfections that informed the new understanding of the Buddha's physical presence, became an important meditative technique in the

Buddhist tradition. Though originally intended for the purpose of remembering the Buddha, "Buddha recollection" later came to acquire a strong emphasis on visualizing the Buddha, frequently with the intent of coming to be in the actual presence of a contemporaneous Buddha in his "Buddha-land." Buddhist iconography plays a prominent supporting role in these meditative visualizations, but, more than that, icons came to be thought of as living embodiments of the Buddha. Buddhist icons are brought to life through the ceremonial opening of their eyes in a ritual that draws its significance from both the importance of vision in Indian religious devotion, and the profound attainment represented by the Buddha's awakening. Therefore, Buddhist iconographic conventions and understandings of the function of icons are illustrative of both Buddhist visualization practice, and Buddhist ideas about the nature of the Buddha's living presence.

The material consulted in this study consists of primary texts from the Buddhist tradition in English translation, as well as secondary scholarly analyses from English and Japanese language sources. Prior scholarship in English on seeing or visualizing the Buddha has primarily treated the topic within either a more narrowly or broadly defined scope and disciplinary context different from the one adopted in this study. English scholarship discusses extensively the visualization of the Buddha in the Pure Land tradition, but it is seldom the primary focus of research, especially in works that address the entire Pure Land tradition from its origins in India through its spread to East Asia. Art historians have explored early beliefs that informed the making of images and the desire to see the Buddha as a result of the debate over aniconism and the origin of the Buddha image, but these studies rarely address the later doctrinal and conceptual developments of

these beliefs. And studies that do discuss these developments are generally confined to one specific concept, doctrine, text, Buddhist philosopher or Buddhist school. On the other hand, thematically relevant material can also be found in scholarship on the subject of visuality in the Buddhist tradition, though usually in the context of a much wider treatment of these ideas. In this study, I attempt to strike a balance between a broad, general analysis of historical trends in Buddhism and a narrow, sectarian or textual focus by examining a fairly narrow range of concepts related to seeing the Buddha across a relatively extensive historical span of the Buddhist tradition.

Outline and Chapter Summaries

This study is broadly organized in relation to the life of Śākyamuni Buddha. Chapter One discusses accounts from Buddhist texts that treat seeing the historical Buddha Śākyamuni as a dominant thematic motif, or that profess to give a record of a Buddha image made during the life of the Buddha. Because these accounts all date to well after the death of Śākyamuni, and occur over a broad range of time, they should not be considered historically reliable accounts of events or beliefs from the time of Śākyamuni's life. However, these accounts do serve to illustrate some of the earliest known and most persistent attitudes toward seeing the Buddha among the Buddhist faithful. Chapter Two discusses some of the potential philosophical, conceptual and cultural bases for these attitudes in Indian thought, as well as lays the groundwork for the discussions of doctrinal and conceptual developments that are taken up in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three discusses Buddhist devotional practices after the death of the Buddha, with a particular emphasis on the beginnings of the Buddha image tradition and its conceptual foundations. Chapter Four describes the doctrinal and conceptual elaborations of the idea of seeing the Buddha that emerged in the context of the early Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition. Ideas from the early Mahāyāna tradition that were particularly influential to developments in the conception of seeing the Buddha were the belief in multiple Buddhas of the present, and in multiple bodies of the Buddha. Chapter Five further discusses theses developments in the context of the contemporaneous Buddha who came to have the largest following in East Asian Buddhism: Amitābha Buddha in his Pure Land of Sukhāvatī.

CHAPTER 1

Seeing the Historical Buddha, Śākyamuni

Seeing Śākyamuni Buddha in Buddhist Literature

Stories indicating the high value placed on seeing the Buddha can already be found in the earliest Buddhist texts. For example, in the *Saṃyuttanikāya*[4] there is the story of the laymen Isidatta and Purāna who, upon hearing that the Buddha will soon be setting off on a tour from the nearby town of Śrāvastī, instruct a watchman to inform them of the Buddha's approach. Upon finally gaining an audience with the Buddha, they express, in the repetitive manner characteristic of the Pāli *nikāya*s, the distress they feel whenever they hear that the Buddha is traveling to a town or kingdom further away from them, and, conversely, their joy in hearing that the Buddha is traveling to a place nearer to them.[5]

Other examples of personal visitations with the Buddha from the Pāli *nikāya*s frequently center on moments of crisis, such as an illness or imminent death, on which occasion the Buddha usually counsels the sufferer on the impermanence of the body or gives a sermon on the seven factors of enlightenment (*bodhyaṅga*).[6] One such story is the

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[4] "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha"

[5] SN 55.6: 1793-96 (translated by Bhikku Bodhi).

[6] Ōminami, "Kenbutsu," 27. According to Pāli sources, the seven factors of enlightenment are: 1) mindfulness (*sati*); 2) investigation of the dharma (*dharmavicaya*); 3) energy (*viriya*); 4) joy (*pīti*); 5) tranquility (*passaddhi*); 6) meditation (*samādhi*), and; 7) equanimity (*upekkhā*).

well-known account of the monk Vakkali from the *Saṃyuttanikāya*. Vakkali, confined to his bed due to a serious illness, asks his attendants to request a visit from the Buddha. While discussing his present physical and spiritual condition with the Buddha, Vakkali expresses his regret at not having been able to come to see the Buddha for some time on account of his illness, to which the Buddha responds, "'Enough Vakkali! Why do you want to see this foul body? One who sees the Dhamma sees me; one who sees me sees the Dhamma. For in seeing the Dhamma, Vakkali, one sees me; and in seeing me, one sees the Dhamma.'"[7] This admonition is followed by a sermon by the Buddha on impermanence, and Vakkali's eventual deathbed attainment of enlightenment (*nirvāṇa*).

This same admonition can be found being given by the Buddha to Vakkali in a very different context in a much later text, Buddhaghoṣa's (5th century CE) *Dhammapada aṭṭhakathā*.[8] In this case, Vakkali, as the still youthful son of a Brahmin family from Śrāvastī, sees the Buddha, and becomes so enamored of his appearance that he becomes a monk in order to be able to see the Buddha at all times. In spite of his forsaking the recitation of scripture (sūtras) and meditation, Vakkali's knowledge is said to mature to the point that he is ready to be admonished by the Buddha in the same manner as the aforementioned story. The wording, according to Burlingame's translation of Buddhaghoṣa, is only slightly different from the version found in the *Saṃyuttanikāya*: "Vakkali, what shall it profit you to look upon this mass of corruption which is called my body? Whosoever, Vakkali, beholds the Law [i.e., dharma], he beholds me."[9]

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[7] SN 22.87: 939 (translated by Bhikku Bodhi).

[8] "Commentary to the *Dhammapada*," which is generally attributed to Buddhaghoṣa and dated to the fourth or fifth century CE.

[9] DA 25.11: 262 (translated by Eugene Watson Burlingame).

Nevertheless, even after being so admonished, Vakkali persists in constantly gazing at the Buddha. As a result, the Buddha bars Vakkali from his presence for the span of a three-month rainy season. However, Vakkali soon becomes despondent to the point of contemplating suicide, so the Buddha manifests a radiant image of himself in front of Vakkali, filling him with profound joy. Vakkali then attains *nirvāṇa* and is later pronounced by the Buddha to be among the foremost in possessing the propensity for faith.

These stories, and especially the admonition of the Buddha that is central to them both, are frequently discussed in studies dealing with early Buddhist attitudes towards seeing the Buddha. However, these passages defy attempts at a straightforward interpretation. Though the corporeal body of the Buddha is denigrated in both stories as corrupt and base, this statement is immediately followed by the equation of seeing the Buddha with seeing the dharma, with no indication of how seeing the *Buddha*, and thus the dharma, should be differentiated from seeing the *body of the Buddha*, and thus a "mass of corruption." To leave the two undifferentiated would be to accept the implication that the dharma is also foul or corrupt, which surely cannot be the case.

The equation of seeing the Buddha with seeing the dharma is particularly emphasized in the *Saṃyuttanikāya* passage, where the equation is both stated in inverse and reiterated. The wording in the *Dhammapada aṭṭhakathā*, in comparison, subordinates seeing the Buddha to seeing the dharma. However, in this version, seeing the Buddha, or more precisely, an image of the Buddha, is what saves Vakkali from his despair and leads to his enlightenment. How this projected image of the Buddha may differ in comparison

to the Buddha, or the body of the Buddha, is an ambiguity about which the early Buddhist texts appear to have little to say.

What is particularly noteworthy in these stories, however, is the equation of the Buddha with the *dharma*, which is frequently construed as indicative of an early understanding of the nature of the Buddha as identical with emptiness (*śūnyatā*). This understanding is corroborated in a verse from the *Theragāthā*,[10] in which the Buddha says, "People who take account of me in dependence on form, and people who seek for me in dependence on sound; these people, ruled by sensual desire, do not know me."[11] Here, knowledge of the Buddha is emphatically not predicated on sense perception, which indicates that the true nature of the Buddha was understood to be formless and empty. Therefore, the proper understanding of seeing the Buddha is clearly not predicated on the literal act of seeing the Buddha's corporeal form.

The difference between a literal and false vs. a non-literal and true sense of seeing the Buddha is well illustrated by the legends involving the monk Subhūti and the nun Utpala[12] at the time of the Buddha's return from Trāyastriṃśa heaven.[13] The story of the Buddha's ascent to Trāyastriṃśa to teach the supreme doctrine (*abhidharma*) to his mother Māyā (or Mahāmāyā), who had been reborn there after her death, is known from several Chinese sources that provide varying descriptions of the details surrounding this

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[10] "The Verses of the Elders," in the *Khuddakanikāya* ("The Collection of Little Texts" or "The Minor Collection").

[11] *Theragāthā*, 469; cited in Ōminami, "Kenbutsu," 28. This is my translation of Ōminami's Japanese translation: 形によってわれを量る者、音声によってわれを求める者、これらの欲貪に支配された者たちは、われを知ることがない。

[12] Also referred to Utpalavarṇā or Utpali.

[13] Trāyastriṃśa is one of many heavenly realms that exist above Mount *Meru* (also *Sumeru* or *Sineru*), center of the Buddhist cosmos, and home to the 33 gods of Hinduism.

event.[14] The accounts of this story as it is found in two of the most well known Chinese records of Buddhism in India will serve our present purposes. Faxian's (337-ca. 422) and Xuanzang's (602-664) records of their travels in India include the story of how Utpala, upon hearing of the Buddha's imminent return from Trāyastriṃśa at Sāṅkāśya, endeavored to be the first to see him when he descended. However, due to her relatively low social position as a female and a nun, this can only be accomplished through her temporary transformation into an all-powerful monarch (*cakravartin*).[15] Faxian's account treats these events very summarily; merely stating that Utpala was "the foremost of all in doing reverence to him [i.e., the Buddha]."[16] However, Xuanzang's account goes on to speak of Subhūti's very different response to the Buddha's descent from Trāyastriṃśa. While sitting in a stone cell, Subhūti somehow becomes aware of the Buddha's forthcoming return, and thinks to himself, "'And now why should I go to the place [i.e., Sāṅkāśya]? Have I not heard him [i.e., the Buddha] declare that all *existing things* are void of reality? Since this is the nature of all things, I have already seen with my eyes of wisdom the spiritual (*fǎ* [法]) body of Buddhā (sic).'"[17] Though in this version of the story Utpala is still the first to see the Buddha in a literal, conventional sense, she is rebuffed, rather than commended, by the Buddha: "'You are not the first to see me! Subhūti…, comprehending the emptiness of all things, he has beheld my spiritual body

[14] For a summary of this story and a discussion of some of its variant versions, see Watters, Thomas, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, 629-645 AD*. Edited by T.W. Rhys Davids and S.W. Bushell. *Oriental Translation Fund, New Series*. Vol. 14 (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1904), 336-338.

[15] There is some uncertainty with regard to whether Utpala accomplishes this feat under her own power, or is transformed by the Buddha. The attribution of agency here depends on how one decides to punctuate the original Chinese passage (see FJ 17: 49n2). However, the power to perform this transformation is attributed to Utpala in a different context in the *Dhammapada aṭṭhakathā* (see DA 14.2: 44).

[16] FJ 17: 49 (translated by James Legge).

[17] XJ 4.15: v. 1, 204-205 (translated by Samuel Beal; italics in XJ).

(*dharmakāya*).'"[18] Here, we see a reinforcement of the distinction between two different types of seeing the Buddha, as well as their predication on different forms, or bodies, of the Buddha. And, seeing the dharma is strongly prioritized over seeing the Buddha.

Accounts of Buddha Images Made During the Life of the Buddha

The occasion of Śākyamuni Buddha's ascent to Trāyastriṃśa is replete with other legendary accounts attesting to a desire to see the Buddha. Faxian's and Xuanzang's accounts both describe legends attributing the creation of the first Buddha images to the impetus provided by Śākyamuni's three-month absence as he instructed his mother in Trāyastriṃśa. According to Faxian, King Prasenajit, longing to see the Buddha during his absence, causes an image of him to be made out of sandalwood and installed in the place where the Buddha usually sat in the Jetavana monastery in Śrāvastī. When the Buddha returns and enters the monastery, the statue is said to stand to greet him, but the Buddha responds: "'Return to your seat. After I have attained to parinirvāṇa,[19] you will serve as a pattern to the four classes[20] of my disciples,'…"[21] Faxian goes on to note that this was the first image of the Buddha ever created, which was thereafter copied by others.

In Xuanzang's account, it is King Udāyana of the kingdom of Kosambī that has a statue of the Buddha made during the Buddha's stay in heaven teaching his mother. Udāyana asks a disciple of the Buddha, Maudgalyāyana, to use his "spiritual power" to

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[18] Ibid.: v. 1, 205. For a discussion of the *dharmakāya* and the three body (*trikāya*) doctrine, see below, 63-72.

[19] "Ultimate," "complete," or "final" *nirvāṇa* ("enlightenment" or "cessation"); usually used to refer to the state of *nirvāṇa* attained at death.

[20] FJ 20: 57n2. The "four classes" are: Śrotāpannas, Sakṛidāgāmins, Anāgāmins, and Ārhats, who are differentiated according to their level of understanding of the four noble truths (*catvāri āryasatyāni*).

[21] FJ 20: 57 (translated by James Legge).

transport an artist to the heavens to observe the "excellent marks of Buddha's body" in preparation for carving a sandalwood statue.[22] Upon the Buddha's return, the statue, as in Faxian's account, rises to greet him, whereupon the Buddha responds: "'The work expected from you is to toil in the conversion of heretics, and to lead in the way of religion future ages.'"[23] Xuanzang, too, claims that this is believed to be the first image made of the Buddha, reporting that King Prasenajit only commissioned his image of the Buddha after he had heard of King Udāyana's statue.[24]

The accounts of the earliest Buddha image presented in these Chinese historical records are neither exceptional nor particularly early. Many other versions of these stories can be found in Buddhist literature, and though they vary considerably in their details, they almost unanimously endorse the production of images as a beneficial and

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[22] XJ 5.5: v. 1, 235-36 (translated by Samuel Beal). A similar legend of an artist being transported to heaven for the purpose of creating an image is recounted by Faxian as well. In this case, and unnamed *arhat* uses his spiritual powers to transport an artist to Tuṣita heaven three times in order to create a colossal image of the future Buddha, Maitreya (FJ 6: 24-25). For a discussion of the "excellent" bodily marks of the Buddha, see below, 57-63.

[23] Ibid.: v. 1, 236 (translated by Samuel Beal). Beal also provides an alternate translation of the Buddha's instructions that is, perhaps, more faithful to the original Chinese: "To teach and convert with diligence the unbelieving, to open the way for guiding future generations, this is your work" (ibid., v. 1, 236n65). The original Chinese is as follows: "*Jiàohuà láo yé* (or *yē/ye*). *Kāidǎo mòshì, shí cǐ wéi* (or *wèi*) *jì*" 教化勞耶。開導末世，寔此爲冀。 (*Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 51.2087.898a15-16). My thanks to Tom Kasulis for reminding me of how problematic the term "religion" is in the context of Buddhism, and Asian "religions" in general.

Elsewhere in Xuanzang's record, King Udāyana's image is reported to have flown, under it's own power, to a city in the Central Asian state of Khotan that is full of men who subscribe to "heretical" (i.e., non-Buddhist) teachings, presumably with the purpose of converting them. Oddly, the image, despite its having the ability to heal people, and displaying it's "divine character" from the moment it arrived there, is unsuccessful in converting the inhabitants of the city, which is eventually buried in a downpour of earth and sand while the lone convert to Buddhism from among them escapes (XJ 12.22: v. 2, 322-24; translated by Samuel Beal).

[24] XJ 4.1: v. 2, 4 (translated by Samuel Beal).

meritorious activity, and emphasize the importance of the first image of the Buddha, both as a uniquely valuable religious icon and as a precedent to be emulated in later times.[25]

The importance of the first Buddha image is well illustrated by Xuanzang's, description of the image that was made for King Udāyana, which is reported to still be extant at the time of his travels in India, approximately one thousand years after the life of the Buddha. The image is described as occasionally emitting a "divine light" by virtue of its spiritual qualities, and as being highly sought after by the leaders of neighboring kingdoms: "The princes of various countries have used their power to carry off this statue, but although many men have tried, not all the number could move it. They therefore worship copies of it, and they pretend that the likeness is a true one, and this is the original of all such figures."[26] In spite of his assurance that the first Buddha image could not be moved, historical records from Xuanzang's home country claim that Udāyana's image of the Buddha, or else a copy thereof, made its way to China.[27] This eventuality was prophesied by none other than the Buddha himself in one version of the story of the Udāyana image. On returning from Trāyastriṃśa and meeting the Buddha image, he tells it that, "'A thousand years after My Nirvāṇa you will be found among the Eastern Xia [i.e., in China], where you will bring great benefits, far and wide, to men and gods.'"[28] In a similar vein, the version of the story found in the *Guanfo sanmei hai jing*[29] has the

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[25] See Soper, "Literary Evidence," 259-65, for an extensive discussion of the Buddhist texts that feature some version of the legend of the first Buddha image.

[26] XJ 5.5: v. 1, 235 (translated by Samuel Beal). See "Figure 1" (below, 23) for an example from Japan of an image that was believed to be the one made for King Udāyana.

[27] Soper, "Literary Evidence," 46-49, 70-72, 88-89; see also, 264-65. The pertinent historical records, many of which are obvious fabrications, contradict one another on this point.

[28] In Soper, "Literary Evidence," 261 (brackets in Soper).

[29] "Sūtra on the Ocean-like Meditation on the Visualization of the Buddha." Often abbreviated in English as the "Sea Sūtra" or "Ocean Sūtra."

Buddha telling Udāyana's Buddha image that, "'In the future you will work great feats for Buddhism. After my Nirvāṇa, it is to you that my disciples will be entrusted.'"[30]

Of course, we would be justified in doubting the historical veracity of these late, legendary accounts of the first Buddha images, or that they reflect beliefs about Buddha images that were held at the time that the Buddha lived. In fact, these accounts are belied by another Buddhist text, wherein the Buddha instructs one of his disciples to make and worship images after his *parinirvāṇa* only *after* he has returned from teaching his mother in Trāyastriṃśa; a recommendation that would be somewhat redundant, if not entirely illogical, if the Buddha had returned to find that an image of himself had already been made. In this story, the Buddha is residing in the Jetavana monastery, the place where the first Buddha image was made during the his stay in Trāyastriṃśa according to Faxian's account, and is asked by Śāriputra what his disciples should do when he has gone or entered *parinirvāṇa*. The Buddha responds: "'Oh Śāriputra, when I have gone or when I have entered parinirvāṇa, an image with the circumference of a banyan tree is to be made… The image is to be made for the purpose of reverence and worship.'"[31] Elided in this excerpt of the original text is a detailed description of the prescribed proportions and appearance of the Buddha image to be made.[32]

A couple of prevalent motifs from the stories recounted in this section are particularly pertinent to this study. First, the overriding concern of all of these accounts is the absence of the Buddha. Whether it be his temporary absence in Trāyastriṃśa, or his

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[30] Ibid., 260.

[31] In Kinnard, *Imaging Wisdom*, 65 (ellipses in Kinnard). For a fuller treatment of the brief Buddhist text in question, the *Pratimālakṣaṇam*, see Banerjee, "Rare Sanskrit Manuscript from Nepal."

[32] See Banerjee, "Rare Sanskrit Manuscript from Nepal," for a full translation.

eventual permanent absence after his *parinirvāṇa*, the pervasive motif of these stories is the distress and desolation felt by the Buddha's followers over his absence, or potential absence. Second, all the stories affirm the capacity of images to function as substitutes for the absent Buddha. Prasenajit's and Udāyana's endeavors to fashion a replacement Buddha are validated by the Buddha himself in his responses to the Buddha images, wherein he proclaims again and again that, after his *parinirvāṇa*, his image is to be entrusted with the guidance of his disciples and the conversion of heretics to the Buddhist path. In other words, after his death, Buddha images are to continue the ministry of the Buddha. Finally, because it functions as substitutes for the Buddha, the Buddha image's likeness to the living Śākyamuni Buddha, as well as the first Buddha image's function as a prototype and exemplar, are highlighted as being of paramount importance.

An additional legend that tells of an image of the Buddha that is said to have been made during his life is the image found in the "Buddha image cave"[33] near the Central Asian city of Nagarahāra. The origin of this image is retold in many sources, including the texts we've been referencing thus far in our discussion of the first Buddha image.[34] Though the details of the story vary between different accounts, the legend invariably centers on a malevolent cave-dwelling dragon[35] (or dragons), which is tormenting the people of Nagarahāra. According to the version of this story found in the *Guanfo sanmei*

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[33] This is also frequently referred to as the "Buddha shadow cave." I am following Yamabe Nobuyoshi in preferring "image" to "shadow." For a discussion of the meaning and usage of the Chinese character that underlies these variant interpretations (i.e., 影 *yǐng*), see Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 263n1.

[34] I.e., the FJ, XJ, and *Guanfo sanmei hai jing*. A list of texts that feature accounts of the "Buddha image cave" can be found in Soper, "Literary Evidence," 265-68.

[35] In a Buddhist context, the Chinese dragon (*lóng* 龍) corresponds the *nāga* of traditional Indian Buddhist and Hindu mythology. *Nāga*s are serpentine water deities that inhabit the underworld, and which are usually thought of as benevolent.

hai jing, the king of Nagarahāra invites Śākyamuni Buddha to come and pacify the dragons living in the cave.[36] In response, Śākyamuni, along with a retinue of his disciples, fly through the air performing miracles and filling the air with emanated Buddhas. However, it is the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi who subdues the dragons by causing manifestations of himself and wheels of fire to spring from the club that he carries, burning the king of the *nāga*s, and driving him into the only place where he can escape the flames: the shadow of Śākyamuni Buddha.

The *nāga* king then listens to a sermon from the Buddha, takes Buddhist precepts, vows never to harm anyone again, and asks the Buddha to stay in the cave forever. The Buddha then takes a seat in the cave and reveals his image, not only to the people of Nagarahāra, but also in Gṛdhrakūṭa, Śrāvastī, Kapilavastu, and everywhere else. Afterwards, he leads a tour of places in the vicinity where he had lived in previous lives, and then makes plans to go back to his homeland. On hearing of these plans, the *nāga* king pleads, "'O Buddha, please stay [here] forever! Why do you abandon me? [If] I do not see the Buddha, I shall do evil things and fall into bad destinies.'"[37] The Buddha consents to the *nāga* king's request, agreeing to stay in the cave for 1,500 years, and then jumps into the rock. "Just like a clear mirror in which one sees one's face, the *nāga*s all saw the Buddha staying in the rock and projecting [an image] outside. … the Bhagavan[38]

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[36] See Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 263-70; Soper "Literary Evidence," 265-68. My discussion is based on the summaries and excerpts of the *Guanfo sanmei hai jing*'s found in these sources. In this version, the cave houses five venomous male *nāga*s and five female *nāga*s, who transformed from *rakṣasī* (evil, flesh-eating female demons) in order to mate with the venomous *nāga*s; cf., XJ 2.2: v. 1, 93-94.

[37] In Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 269 (brackets in Yamabe).

[38] "Lord" or "Master." *Bhagavan* is one of a number of epithets for the Buddha.

was seated in the full-lotus posture in the wall of the cave. When people looked, they saw [the Buddha] from afar, but not from nearby."[39]

Like the stories of the first Buddha image, the creation of the image in the "Buddha image cave" is prompted by the trepidation provoked by the imminent absence of the Buddha. However, there is the significant difference that this image is created by Śākyamuni himself. Alexander Soper observes that:

> there is, I think, a deliberate vagueness in this final lack of distinction between the Buddha and His "shadow" [or, "image" (see above, 17n33)]. The *sūtra*'s writer must have tried his best to foster the belief that the radiance seen by pilgrims within the cave proceeded not from anything left behind, but from the Lord Himself, miraculously preserved there instead of being lost forever in Nirvāṇa. The normal claim made for the "shadow image" asked for it a sanctity much greater than that enjoyed by Udyāna's (sic) statue, for instead of being a human creation it was the work of the Lord [i.e., the Buddha] himself.[40]

Soper's observations are perceptive, but I would add that this vagueness is not incidental. Rather, it has close parallels to the Buddhist idea of manifestation Buddhas. The passage of the *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* that features the story of the "Buddha image cave" makes frequent reference to emanation Buddhas (*huàfó* 化佛),[41] which, among other things, are said to emanate from the Buddha in such great number that they fill the sky as he

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[39] In ibid., 269 (brackets in Yamabe). An exposition of the methodology for visualizing the Buddha immediately follows this account of the image's origin (see ibid. 269-70). The manifestation of an "image" or "shadow" of a Buddha in the wall of a cave is not unique to this story; see ibid., 278, where Śākyamuni, while seated in a cave just before the time of his enlightenment, sees an image of an unspecified Buddha, which is described as being "still bright at the present day." (cf., FJ 31: 87-88).

[40] Soper, "Literary Evidence," 266. However, this observation is less applicable in regard to other versions of this legend, where the Buddha is said to have left his "shadow" or "image" in the cave wall, rather than leapt into the wall; cf., FJ 13: 39 (translated by James Legge); and XJ 2.2: v. 1, 94 (translated by Samuel Beal), where the Buddha is depicted as assuring the *nāga* king that "'When I am *about to die*, I will leave you my shadow…'" (emphasis added).

[41] *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 15.643.680-81. This term is also translated as, among other things, "transformation buddhas," and "emanation buddhas." And this must be what Soper is referring to when he speaks of "phantom Buddhas" in his excerpts of this story, though this appears to be a rare English gloss (see Soper, "Literary Evidence," 266).

approaches the entrance of the *nāga* cave. The concept of the Buddha's "manifestation body" (*nirmāṇakāya*) will be discussed below (see 63-72).

One feature of the "Buddha image cave" story that we don't find in the stories of the first Buddha image is the stress placed on the image of the Buddha as an inspiration for moral conduct. Though in the story of Vakkali from the *Dhammapada aṭṭhakathā* we saw that a strong desire to see the Buddha can present ethical obstacles (see above, 8-13), the implication of the "Buddha image cave" story is that simply not seeing the Buddha, or his image, can be sufficient to induce immoral behavior. In both cases, however, the experience of seeing an image of the Buddha is presented as being efficacious in remedying immoral or unmeritorious behavior. This is made explicit in Xuanzang's account of the "Buddha image cave," where the Buddha instructs the *nāga* king: "'…if an evil heart rises in you, you must look at my shadow, and because of its power of love and virtue your evil purposes will be stopped.'"[42]

Conversely, the ability to see the Buddha can be considered a reward for, or sign of, proper ethical conduct. This is the implication of Xuanzang's description of the image in the "Buddha image cave":

> In old days there was a shadow of Buddha to be seen here [i.e., Nagarahāra], bright as the true form, with all its characteristic marks. In later days men have not seen it so much. What does appear is only a feeble likeness. But whoever prays with fervent faith, he is mysteriously endowed, and he sees it clearly before him, though not for long.[43]

The ethical aspect of seeing the Buddha image is reinforced in Xuanzang's first-hand experience within the "Buddha image cave" as it is told in his biography, *Datang*

[42] XJ 2.2: v. 1, 94 (translated by Samuel Beal).
[43] Ibid., 93 (translated by Samuel Beal).

daciensi sanzang fashi zhuan.[44] Upon first entering the cave Xuanzang can see only darkness, but, as he repeatedly makes offerings of hundreds of prostrations, and chants sūtras and hymns, a small light appears in the cave that grows progressively larger until it fills the entire cave, and reveals a brilliant image of the Buddha.

> The noble appearance was radiant and the divine figure resplendent. When he looked up, he was filled with joy and excitement which were incomparable to anything else. … The bodily marks above the knee were extremely clear, but below the lotus seat [the image] was a little obscure. On both sides of the knees and behind [him] there were complete images of bodhisattvas and noble monks. … Five out of the six people could see, but one finally could not see anything. Thus, [the image] was clearly visible for a while.[45]

In the context of the immediately preceding description of Xuanzang's fervent acts of devotion, the careful attention paid here to what was visible, and to what extent, within the cave, as well as to how many members of the party were able to obtain a vision of the Buddha, indicates that the ability to see the Buddha is understood as an index of the devotee's morality and piety.

Conclusion

Though our discussion in this chapter has focused on seeing Śākyamuni Buddha during his life, the textual evidence we've drawn from ranges across several centuries after the death of the Buddha. This chronological condensation runs the risk of obscuring the historical developments in Buddhist thought regarding what it means to see the Buddha, as well as of projecting these ideas back to the time of the Buddha's life, but it does serve the purpose of highlighting some of the persistent concerns that informed the beliefs about seeing the Buddha.

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[44] "Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Cien Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty."
[45] In Yamabe "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 285 (brackets in Yamabe).

Of course, the most persistent theme featured in the works we've discussed thus far is a desire on the part of the Buddhist faithful to see the Buddha. This desire is expressed in both positive and negative terms. That is, on the one hand, it is expressed as a positive desire to see the Buddha, the most conspicuous example of which is Vakkali from the *Dhammapada aṭṭhakathā*. And, on the other hand, it is expressed as an aversion to the Buddha's absence. These two facets of the desire to see the Buddha are illustrated in a neat symmetry in the story of Isidatta and Purāna from the *Saṃyuttanikāya*.

Images of the Buddha, whether conventional, man-made sculptures or magical manifestations created by the Buddha, are always portrayed as being beneficial to those that are afforded a vision of them. It would seem that they are not considered to be susceptible to the same types of misunderstandings that are alluded to in the Buddha's remonstrations against the futility of seeing his "foul body." If, as indicated in the stories of the monk Vakkali, the proper object of vision when seeing the Buddha is the formless dharma, rather than the corporeal body of the Buddha, then clearly what is intended here are not conventional notions of either vision or the nature of the Buddha as an historical person. A consideration of the cultural, philosophical, and doctrinal understandings of vision and its relationship to knowledge will be the subject of the following chapter.



Figure 1:
Sculpture of a standing Shakamuni (Śākyamuni) Buddha.
When this image was first brought to Japan by the monk Chōnen 奝然 (10th – 11th century), it was thought to be the first Buddha image, carved out of sandalwood for the Indian King Udāyana. Legend still maintains that it is a copy of the first Buddha image.
For an account of this image's history, see McCallum, Donald F. "The Saidaiji Lineage of the Seiryōji Shaka Tradition," *Archives of Asian Art* 48 (1996): 51-67.
(see p. viii for image details)

CHAPTER 2

Vision and Knowledge in Indian and Buddhist Thought

Vision and Knowledge in Indic Languages and Buddhist Discourse

In the previous chapter we saw that one of the earliest definitive statements on the nature of seeing the Buddha declared that seeing the Buddha should be understood as equivalent to seeing the dharma, as contrasted against seeing the corporeal body of the Buddha. Dharma has three primary meanings in Buddhist thought: 1) it refers to the fundamental natural laws that govern the physical and moral order and operation of the universe; 2) it is the entirety of the teachings of the Buddha; and 3) in some philosophical systems, it refers to the fundamental constituent elements that comprise the world's physical and mental components, as well as the taxonomic schemes that classify these elements.[46] The problem is that only the last of these definitions refers to something that could be considered an object of vision according to a conventional understanding of the word, and even in this sense (i.e., as "constituent elements") it is difficult to see how this would differ markedly from seeing the corporeal body of the Buddha. Thus, regardless of which sense of the word dharma is meant, it is difficult to ascertain how to understand it as an object of vision, and interpret it in accordance with its textual context.

[46] Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "Dharma."

The difficulty lies in the fact that the meaning of dharma is more suitably understood as an object of knowledge, and not vision. However, in Indian thought knowledge and vision are closely associated conceptually.[47] David McMahan points out that Indic languages make an implicit linguistic connection between seeing and knowing that can be easily recognized by English speakers because both languages are members of the same Indo-European language family. He notes, for example, that:

> the Latin *videre*, which means "to see" … is cognate with Sanskrit √*vid*, "to know," the root of *Veda*, the ancient Indian scriptures considered the ultimate source of knowledge. The common Indo-European root is **weid*- "to see, to know truly." From this word we get the English "vision," as well as "wisdom," and "wit." The Indo-European **sekw*- is also the root of the English "see" and the Hittite "to know."[48]

Furthermore, Sanskrit visual terms, and especially words derived from √*paś* and √*dṛś*, have a range of meanings similar to that of English "vision," which includes, among others, sight as a physical faculty, mental clarity, foresight, and mystical vision.[49]

McMahan also points out that metaphors drawn from perceptual and somatic experience play a fundamental role in language and cognition, and that, therefore, the metaphor "seeing is knowing" can be considered natural, at least in the sense of its being

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[47] The following analysis of the Indian conception of knowledge is valid if we understand it as applying only to empirical knowledge. Bimal Krishna Matilal claims that a distinction between empirical and non-empirical knowledge can appropriately be applied to Indian theories of knowledge (*pramāṇa*); the former being based in sense-experience, and the latter being derived from scripture. The correct oral (and thus, aural) transmission, as well as the correct ritual recitation, of the Vedas, and especially the "revealed" (*śruti*) texts containing the immutable and infallible truths of the Vedic tradition, plays an important role in the Hindu and general Indian conceptions of knowledge. However, I think the important distinction here is that the senses do not play a significant *generative* role in the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, as they do in empirical knowledge; except, perhaps, in the exceptional cases of Buddhas, Jinas, and other sages who have direct insight into the truth, and who are the ultimate sources of scriptural knowledge. See Matilal, *Perception*, 31-35; Klostermaier, *Hinduism*, 16-19.

[48] McMahan, *Empty Vision*, 57.

[49] Ibid., 69-70.

based in human physiology.[50] For example, the eyes respond to the desire to know the external world through the ability to move and focus in ways that the other sense organs do not. And, especially since the advent of writing, visual representation has been the primary mode through which humans gather and transmit information and knowledge.[51]

Although in some sense natural, the "seeing is knowing" metaphor is also culturally constructed, which is evidenced by the fact that Dravidian language families, which coexisted with the Indo-European languages of India, use words that can be translated into English as "desire," "intention," "hope," or "wish" as metaphors for knowledge, instead of words associated with vision or sense perception.[52] McMahan tentatively proposes that these variant metaphorical understandings of knowledge may demarcate an opposition between a native Dravidian culture that included religious beliefs centered on the temporal processes of the natural world and a cyclical understanding of time, and an Indo-Aryan culture that included Vedic and Brahman religious traditions centered on substantialist, eternalist, and essentialist metaphysics. In this light, it might be expected that Buddhist metaphysics would demand the adoption of a metaphorical trope for knowledge derived from the Dravidian tradition, rather than the Indo-Aryan tradition. However, McMahan claims that in Buddhist discourse, "visual metaphor was often used not so much to evoke a sense of static representation of an

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[50] Ibid., 56-64. Here McMahan draws on the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson; see *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
[51] Ibid., 56-59.
[52] Ibid., 59-60.

object, but rather an unimpeded vision diffused throughout empty space – a vision of the insubstantiality of things that constitutes awakening."[53]

In any case, visual metaphors for knowledge are pervasive in Buddhist discourse. Vision in Buddhist discourse is construed as expansive and passive, and thus able to encompass all dharmas, and an awareness of their fundamental emptiness. And vision, when construed as a passive, receptive faculty, is not susceptible to the same karmic consequences that accrue to actions of the body, mind, and speech. Conversely, vision can be analytical and discriminatory; cutting away delusion and wrong views, and attaining "insight" (*vipaśyanā*) into the supreme truth. Being awake, as opposed to asleep, and seeing clearly, as opposed to having obstructed vision, are frequently used as metaphors for the undeluded, enlightened state of awareness. Finally, in a similar metaphor, Buddhist knowledge and wisdom are frequently equated with light.[54]

Darśana

Another indication of the close association between vision and knowledge in Indian thought is the fact that the same word, *darśana*,[55] is used to refer to a "view," or "point of view," in the intellectual sense, as well as "vision" or "sight," especially of a sacred place, person, or image. In regard to the former meaning, Damien Keown claims that *darśana* is the Sanskrit word most similar in meaning to the Western word "philosophy." It is used to refer to the six classical philosophical schools of ancient India,

[53] Ibid., 61-62. It could also be speculated that Buddhism deliberately co-opted the visual metaphors of the Brahman and Vedic discourse as a rhetorical strategy.

[54] Ibid., 65-72.

[55] Also frequently written as *darśan* or *darshan*, from the word in Hindi.

and, in a Buddhist context, to the "path of seeing" (*darśanamārga*), one of the "five paths" (*pañcamārga*) to Buddhahood, which allows the practitioner to eliminate uncertainty (*vicikitsā*), false views (*dṛṣṭi*), and spiritual defilements (*kleśa*).[56]

Diana Eck indicates that the latter sense of "vision" or "sight" antedates the use of *darśana* to refer to philosophical systems or schools. In the hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, which are among the earliest texts of Vedic India, *darśana* is used to denote a type seeing that she describes as a "mystical, supranatural beholding" or "visionary experiencing."[57] In this sense of the word, *darśana* can be translated as the "auspicious sight" of the divine, the desire for which underlies many Indian religious practices, including pilgrimages to sacred sites, the worship of images at temples and shrines, and visiting holy people or sages.[58]

In the case of holy persons and sacred images, in particular, the auspiciousness of this vision is in large part derived from the fact that the act of seeing is reciprocated. In fact, though the worshipper, as onlooker, may be assumed to be the active participant in exchange of *darśana*, in actuality, *darśana* is spoken of as being given to the worshipper by the object of vision.[59] In Indian understanding, the exchange of gazes that

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[56] Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.vv. "darśana," "darśana-mārga". The other four of the five paths (*pañcamārga*) are "the path of accumulation" (*saṃbhāramārga*), "the path of preparation" (*prayogamārga*), "the path of cultivation" (*bhāvanāmārga*), and "the path of 'no more learning'" (*aśaikṣamārga*); see ibid., s.v. "pañca-mārga."

[57] Eck, *Darśan*, 7.

[58] Ibid., 3-5. Though *darśana* is usually discussed, as is the case with Eck, in the context of Hindu religious practice, it is an ancient concept that informs the practices of most or all of the Indic religions (John C. Huntington, personal communication). And in any case, Hinduism has exerted a pronounced influence on Buddhism in India from virtually the time of Buddhism's inception in the sixth to fifth centuries BCE. Therefore, I do not find it necessary to follow Eck and other scholars in explicitly characterizing *darśana* as a Hindu religious concept, though it may be the case that in some details *darśana* related practices and concepts differ among Buddhism, Hinduism and other Indian religious traditions.

[59] Ibid., 5.

characterizes *darśana* has a palpable, intimate quality that is related to the sense of touch and non-verbal communication expressed through the exchange of glances.[60] In his study of recent Hindu religious movements, Lawrence Babb concludes that *darśana* is conceived of as fluid "flow of seeing" exchanged between the "deity-guru" and the devotee, by means of which their visions are intermingled, and the devotee attains not only an understanding of the divine being's true form, but the ability to see as the divine being sees. Thus, in addition to the general benefit obtained as a result of being the subject of the divine being's compassionate gaze, the recipient of *darśana* also receives the soteriologically transformative benefit of being initiated into a better vision.[61]

The importance of being seen by the object of worship results in a pronounced emphasis on the eyes of sacred images. The addition of the eyes to sacred images is the final step in the consecration ceremonies that instill the images with life and divine power. As a result of the image's ritual consecration, the sacred image becomes more than just an object of focus in support of meditative concentration, but a "real embodiment of the deity. … [that is] charged with the presence of the god,"[62] and therefore able to bestow *darśana* to its devotees.

Smṛti *and* Anusmṛti

Though they don't necessarily involve a visual component, I would like to briefly discuss the two related conceptions of *smṛti* and *anusmṛti* because of their importance to

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[60] Ibid., 6-7.

[61] Babb, "Glancing," 390-91, 396-97.

[62] Ibid., 34. The image consecration and "eye-opening" ceremonies will be discussed further below (see 36-38)

the Buddhist meditative tradition and developments in Buddhist doctrine after the death of the Buddha that are central to this study. *Smṛti* can be understood in an ordinary psychological sense as being similar in meaning to "memory" or "recollection," but in the context of Buddhist meditative practice it is more commonly translated as "mindfulness."[63] Its importance in Buddhist meditative practice is indicated by the fact that it is included in several lists of factors that are conducive to enlightenment. It most frequently occurs in early Buddhist literature in the context of the four applications of mindfulness (*smṛtiupasthāna*), which lead to the attainment of final *nirvāṇa*.[64] In early Buddhist texts featuring discussions of the four applications of mindfulness, "mindfulness" (*smṛti*) is almost always associated with "awareness" (*samprajanya*). In Abhidharma literature it came to be encompassed within a more complex soteriological system of thirty-seven aids to enlightenment (*bodhipākṣikadharma*), and increasingly associated with "insight" (*prajñā*), as that which either enables the concentration necessary to generate insight, or that which enables the cognitive retention of insights that have already been gained.[65]

Anusmṛti can be translated as, among other things, "recollection," "reflection," "remembrance," or "recalling." It's meaning overlaps considerably with *smṛti*, though it appears to lack the same emphasis on focused awareness of things present to the mind

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[63] Cox, "Mindfulness and Memory," 67-68.

[64] Ibid., 68-70. The five [or seven] forces (*bala*) and the five controlling factors (*indriya*) (which are the same lists) are mindfulness (*smṛti*), faith (*śraddhā*), energy (*vīrya*), concentration (*samādhi*), and insight (*prajñā*). The noble eightfold path is comprised of: 1) right view (*samyagdṛṣṭi*); 2) right resolve (*samyaksamkalpa*); 3) right speech (*samyagvāc*); 4) right action (*samyakkarmānta*); 5) right livelihood (*samyagājīva*); 6) right effort (*samyakvyāyāma*); 7) right mindfulness (*samyaksmṛti*), and; 8) right meditation (*samyaksamādhi*). The four applications of mindfulness (*smṛtiupasthāna*) are: mindfulness of the body (*kāya*), feelings (*vedanā*), mind events (*citta*), and factors (dharma). For the seven limbs of enlightenment (*bodhyaṅga*), see above, 8n6.

[65] Ibid., 72-77.

and senses, and therefore may more closely correspond in meaning to the English word "memory." From among the earliest Buddhist sūtras, two different lists of six and ten objects of *anusmṛti* can be found in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*.[66] The first six objects of *anusmṛti* are featured in two nearly identical accounts of Śākyamuni giving a sermon to the monk Mahānāma of Kapilavastu. The Buddha instructs Mahānāma to establish himself in the five powers (*bala*), and then to recollect the Buddha, the dharma, the monastic community (*saṃgha*), morality (*śīla*), liberality (*cāga*), and the gods (*deva*).[67] Elsewhere the Buddha instructs his monks to recollect the same six objects, along with the following four: breathing (*ānāpāna*), death (*maraṇa*), the body (*kāya*), and calming (*upasanti*).[68] While in the early *nikāya* literature, and their corresponding Chinese *āgama*s, each object of *anusmṛti* is given equal emphasis, in later Mahāyāna literature the first three objects of *anusmṛti* are given priority. Also, instructions regarding the practice of *anusmṛti* are more detailed in the *āgama* literature, suggesting an increased interest in *anusmṛti* among the compilers of these later texts.[69]

Conclusion

By exploring the linguistic associations between words for seeing and knowing in Indic languages, the prevalent visual metaphors for knowledge used in Buddhist literature, and the close association between seeing, knowing and religious practice entailed by the meaning of *darśana*, I have attempted to clarify the conceptual and

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[66] "The Increasing by One Collection" or "The Numerical Discourses." Lists of three, four and five objects of *anusmṛti* can also be found elsewhere in the Pāli *nikāya*s; see Harrison, "Commemoration," 216.

[67] AN 11.2 – i, ii: v. 5, 209-13 (translated by F.L. Woodward). For a list of the five powers (*bala*), see above, 30n64.

[68] AN 1.16: v. 1, 27 (translated by F.L. Woodward).

[69] Harrison, "Buddhānusmṛti," 37.

cultural context that informed the distinctions and associations drawn between different types of seeing and knowing in early Buddhism. The equation of seeing with knowing in the Indian religious tradition necessitated the doctrinal definition of what it is one should know when one sees a holy person. In the case of seeing the Buddha, this was designated as the dharma.

However, contrary to the idea that seeing the Buddha is exclusively a means of knowing the dharma, the concept of *darśana* evokes some of the ambivalent attitudes towards seeing the Buddha featured in the stories described in the preceding chapter. Though *darśana* is understood as a way to know the true form of the sacred figure, and to partake in his or her way of seeing/knowing, it is also understood in a more prosaically ritualistic sense as the conferral of a type of religious blessing, wherein the devotee receives the benefits that accrue from the benevolence of the reciprocated "auspicious glance" of the holy person. This latter aspect of *darśana*, in so much as it is based on a literal understanding of vision, is reminiscent of some of the motives for seeing the Buddha that are either condemned or merely tolerated in the early Buddhist texts that we discussed in the previous chapter.

Finally, in this chapter I introduced the two related concepts of *smṛti* and *anusmṛti*, which denote a form of knowledge more closely associated with memory and awareness than vision. Though *smṛti* and *anusmṛti* do not contribute to our understanding of vision, or the relationship between vision and knowledge, the concepts of both *anusmṛti* and *darśana* with the Buddha as their object would become central to important developments in Buddhist doctrine and practice after the death of Śākyamuni Buddha.

These developments will be explored further below, but first we will turn to a discussion of the practices endorsed for venerating the Buddha after the *parinirvāṇa* of Śākyamuni.

CHAPTER 3

Vision and Veneration of the Buddha after Śākyamuni's *Parinirvāṇa*

The **Parinirvāṇa** *of Śākyamuni Buddha and Relic Veneration*

An account of Śākyamuni's final days and death is given in great detail in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*. As can be surmised from the themes discussed above in Chapter One, this sūtra repeatedly highlights the occasion of this last opportunity to see and be in the presence of the Buddha. For example, apprehension over the imminent death of the Buddha is conveyed when Ānanda, a prominent disciple of the Buddha who is traveling with him during his final days, is repeatedly chastised by the Buddha for failing to ask the Buddha to prolong his own life to one hundred years, despite being repeatedly prompted by the Buddha to do so.[70] And the importance of this final opportunity to see the Buddha is demonstrated when the *deva*s, whom only the Buddha is able to perceive, gather from "ten world-spheres" to completely fill an area encompassing "twelve yojanas"[71] around the grove where the Buddha is about to attain his *parinirvāṇa*. When asked by Ānanda why he has just told one of his attendant monks to move, the Buddha explains that some of the *deva*s are complaining:

[70] DN 16: 246, 251-53 (translated by Maurice Walshe). The Buddha is said to have died in his eightieth year (see ibid.: 268), but there is some uncertainty as to the actual time span to which the Buddha is supposed to be able to extend his own life (see ibid.: 569-70n400).

[71] A *yojana* is considered to be roughly equivalent to between five and nine miles.

> "We have come a long way to see the Tathāgata.[72] It is rare for a Tathāgata, a fully-enlightened Buddha, to arise in the world, and tonight in the last watch the Tathāgata will attain final Nibbāna, and this mighty monk is standing in front of the Lord, preventing us from getting a last glimpse of the Tathāgata! … All too soon the Blessed Lord is passing away, all too soon the Well-Farer is passing away, all too soon the Eye of the World is disappearing!"[73]

However, the same ambivalence toward the merit of seeing the Buddha that was discussed above in Chapter One is evident when, though he accommodates the *deva*s' desire to see him by asking his attendant monk to move, the Buddha goes on to note that "those *deva*s who are free from craving endure patiently, saying: 'All compounded things are impermanent – what is the use of this?'"[74]

The practice that the Buddha does recommend to Ānanda for the time after he has passed away and is no longer available to give audience to or receive homage from members of the *saṃgha* is to go to see the four places where he was born, attained supreme enlightenment, set in motion the Wheel of the Dharma (i.e., preached his first sermon after attaining enlightenment), and attained his final *nirvāṇa*.[75] Also, the Buddha advises that, after cremation, his remains should be placed in burial mounds (stūpas) erected at crossroads, "'And whoever lays wreaths or puts sweet perfumes and colors there with a devout heart, will reap benefit and happiness for a long time.'"[76]

Especially when we note that, elsewhere in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*, the Buddha advises Ānanda that, "'You should live as islands unto yourselves, being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge, with the Dhamma as an island, with the

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[72] *Tathāgata* (lit: "thus come and/or thus gone one") is an epithet for the Buddha.

[73] DN 16: 263 (translated by Maurice Walshe).

[74] Ibid (translated by Maurice Walshe).

[75] Ibid. (translated by Maurice Walshe). These locations refer to Lumbini (modern Rummindei in Nepal), Uruvelā (modern Bodhgayā), *migadāya* ("Deer Park") at Isipatana (modern Sarnāth), and Kusinārā, respectively.

[76] Ibid.: 264 (translated by Maurice Walshe).

Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge,'"[77] the discrepancy between the Buddhist doctrine and practices advocated here and the later texts asserting that Buddha images will be entrusted with the propagation of the dharma (see above, 13-17) becomes evident. Indeed, the primary object of Buddhist veneration immediately after Śākyamuni's death was the stūpa, which merited such treatment primarily because it was thought of as a container of his bodily relics (*śarīra*). However, in the later Buddhist tradition, relics came to include not only the Buddha's bodily remains, but also contact relics (*pāribhogika*; objects closely associated with the Buddha by virtue of him having owned, used, or been in contact with them), and dharma relics (i.e., any object that records the Buddha's teaching; such as sūtras, *dhāraṇī*, dharma verses, etc.). John Strong notes that, despite a "tendency in Western studies to lump together relics with images," images are not included even in this expanded definition of Buddhist relics.[78]

Buddhist Image Consecration Rituals and the Buddha Image as Reliquary

Rather, Buddha images only become worthy of veneration by virtue of being ritually consecrated, a process that often includes the insertion of bodily or textual (dharma) relics into the image,[79] which essentially transforms the image into a type of reliquary. Richard Gombrich's description of a Buddha image consecration ritual (*prāṇapratiṣṭha*) in Sri Lanka is strongly reminiscent of the Hindu rituals described by

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[77] Ibid.: 245 (translated by Maurice Walshe).

[78] Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, 8, 18-20. Strong suggests that this tendency may stem from a conflation of a Theravādan system of classification for Buddhist shrines (*caitya*) with the classification of different types of relics. According to Strong, what are often categorized as "reminder" relics (*uddeśaka*), which includes images, should be properly understood as shrines instead (i.e., *uddeśakacaitya*).

[79] Ibid., 20.

Eck in her discussion of *darśana*.[80] In both the Buddhist and Hindu consecration rituals, the eye-opening ceremony is the final and most important stage of the consecration process, whereby the image is brought to life. And in both cases the newly opened gaze of the image is thought to be fraught with potential danger due to its incredible power and energy. Therefore, the gaze must initially fall on certain ritually prescribed objects.[81] And just as the Buddha image is imbued with the Buddha's presence through the insertion of relics, Hindu images may house a casket representing the "Brahman substance" (*brahmapadārtha*) in their chest cavities.[82]

The eye-opening ceremony appears to be an integral and universal component of the image consecration ritual as it is practiced throughout Buddhist Asia. Though frequently performed in parallel with the image consecration ceremony, the insertion of relics into the image is a separate rite that is not essential to the image's status as worthy of veneration.[83] Thus, despite the early emphasis on the physical presence of the Buddha as represented by his bodily relics, based on the similarity of the Hindu and Buddhist eye-opening ceremonies, we can conclude that the visual exchange characteristic of *darśana* is more essential to the merit of a Buddha image as an object of veneration. Donald Swearer adds that vision, as a metaphor for the unsurpassed knowledge attained by the

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[80] Though he disagrees with him, Gombrich notes that Ananda Coomaraswamy views the image consecration ritual's eye-opening ceremony (*nētra pinkama*) as Hindu in origin; see Gombrich, "The Consecration of a Buddhist Image," 27, where he cites Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art* (Broad Campden: Essex House Press, 1908), 70-75. Eck's discussion of *darśana* is summarized in the previous chapter; see above, 27-29.

[81] Compare ibid., 24-25, 33; and Eck, *Darśan*, 5-6.

[82] Eck, *Darśan*, 40-41.

[83] The separation, in Sri Lanka and Tibet, between relic insertion and image consecration rituals is discussed in Gombrich, "The Consecration of a Buddhist Image," 25; and Bentor, "The Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Consecration Ritual," 68-72, respectively. Regarding the ubiquity of the eye-opening ceremony throughout Asia, see Chapter Eight in Swearer, *Becoming the Buddha*, 211-34.

Buddha, is the grounds for the centrality of the eye-opening ceremony in Buddhist image consecration.[84] In particular, Swearer cites Alex Wayman's analysis of the different types of "eyes" described in Buddhist literature, each of which allow for the attainment of a different kind of knowledge.[85] In the context of this metaphorical understanding, the opening of the Buddha image's eyes functions as a vivid reenactment of the awakening attained by the Buddha.

The Beginning of the Buddha Image Tradition after the **Parinirvāṇa**

While our discussion of the Buddha image consecration ritual clarifies how the Buddha image was legitimated as an object of veneration, it offers little in the way of an explanation of why and when the first images of the Buddha began to be produced. Gombrich contends that the first reference to the eye-opening ceremony (*nētra pinkama*) in Buddhist literature can be attributed to Buddhaghoṣa in the fifth century. Buddhaghoṣa claims that the third century BCE Indian emperor Aśoka, a convert to Buddhism who was instrumental in the early propagation of Buddhism, celebrated *akkhipūjā* (a Pāli term that is, according to Gombrich, equivalent in meaning to *nētra pinkama*) for seven days upon the miraculous creation of an exceptionally beautiful image of the Buddha.[86]

If we take Buddhaghoṣa at his word, however, it would mean that the Buddha image tradition is much older than scholars have traditionally been willing to accept. The

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[84] Swearer, *Becoming the Buddha*, 216-17.

[85] Wayman, "The Buddhist Theory of Vision," 155-56. Wayman notes that in Pāli and Mahāyāna literature can be found varying sets of three and five "eyes" of flesh, insight, dharma, knowledge, and the Buddha, as well as the divine eye.

[86] Gombrich, "The Consecration of a Buddhist Image," 26. This is not the only account of a Buddha image made during the time of Aśoka; see Huntington, J., "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 43-45; and FJ 17: 50; see also, Soper, "Literary Evidence," 52, for the legend of an image made by on of Aśoka's daughters.

evidence that these scholars give in support of a relatively late dating of the Buddha image tradition is that the oldest extant Buddhist art, which decorates monumental stūpas that date from the centuries immediately after the reign of Aśoka (i.e., the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE), conspicuously lack anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha, but instead features objects that serve as symbols or reminders of the Buddha or some aspect of his life or teaching.[87] This has led to the theory, first advanced by Alfred Foucher early in the twentieth century, that early Indian Buddhist art was aniconic, and that the first figurative images of the Buddha were created only later in Gandhāra (modern Afghanistan and Pakistan) under the influence of Greek Hellenic culture, which had been spread as far as the northwest of India by way of the conquests of Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE) and his successors.[88] Building upon Foucher's interpretation, the theory of aniconism came to be widely accepted among art historians at least until Susan Huntington challenged its underlying rationale nearly eight decades later.[89] For those who subscribe to the theory of aniconism, though, Buddhaghoṣa's reference to an image of the Buddha made for emperor Aśoka, to say nothing of the images reported to have been

[87] The most prominent of these early Indian *stūpa* sites include Sāñcī, Bhārhut, and Amarāvatī. Frequently depicted objects that are considered to be aniconic symbols of the Buddha include the *bodhi* tree (*bodhivṛkṣa*) under which Śākyamuni attained enlightenment, the wheel of the dharma (*dharmacakra*) that he set in motion with his first sermon, the *stūpa* that houses his remains, and many others; see the sources cited below, n87, for more extensive lists. However, there is inscriptional evidence that indicates that there may have been figurative Buddha images at Sāñcī (John Huntington, personal communication).

[88] Foucher, "The Greek Origin of the Image of the Buddha," 125-27; see also, Foucher, "The Greek Origin of the Image of the Buddha."

[89] Huntington, S., "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism." Huntington's central challenge to aniconism lies in her reinterpretation of aniconic images as representations of sites of Buddhist devotion after the death of the Buddha, wherein the aniconic "symbols" of the Buddha are actually depictions of monuments or objects at sacred sites associated with the life of the Buddha; such as, the *bodhi* tree at Bodhgayā. For the scholarly debate that Huntington's interpretation led to, see: Dehejia, Vidya, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems" (*Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991): 45-66); and Huntington, Susan, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look" (*Ars Orientalis* 22 (1992): 111-156). A summary of the debate can also be found in Karlsson, "Face to Face with the Absent Buddha," 48-53.

made during the life of Śākyamuni, can only represent a legend concocted afterward, without any basis in historical fact.

"Aniconic" Buddhist art is not, of course, germane to this study because it lacks figurative images of the Buddha. However, the debates surrounding the theory of aniconism and the origin of the Buddha image has shed light on the earliest Buddhist attitudes toward the production of Buddha images and visualization of the Buddha, as well as the cultural and historical background that informed the production of Buddha images. First, unlike other religious traditions, most notably Islam, there is little evidence of any general prohibition against the creation of icons or sacred images in the Buddhist tradition.[90] Second, contrary to Foucher's original contention that the Buddha image originated under the influence of Western culture in Gandhāra, it is now widely accepted that the formation of the Buddha image is primarily indebted to native, Indian influences.

Ananda Coomaraswamy was among the first to propose an Indian origin for the Buddha image in Mathurā (or Madhurā, in northern India), shortly after the publication of Foucher's theories on the Gandhāran origin of the Buddha image.[91] The theory of a Mathurān origin of the Buddha has gained broad scholarly support, particularly in light of the frequently cited research of Van Lohuizen – de Leeuw. Based on a detailed comparative stylistic analysis of twenty-two similar early stone sculptures from Gandhāra, Van Lohuizen – de Leeuw finds that they are much more representative of the

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[90] Huntington, J., "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 25-29. Huntington has examined many of the Buddhist texts that have been cited as featuring a prohibition against image making, and concludes that only one explicit, albeit indirect, reference to such a prohibition can be found in the monastic code (*vinaya*) of the Sarvāstivādin sect.

[91] Van Lohuizen – de Leeuw, "New Evidence," 377-80; Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image."

Mathurān Buddhist image tradition than the Hellenized Gandhāran tradition, and that they are among the earliest extant sculptures from the region of northwest India; thus predating the images of the Gandhāran tradition.[92] Furthermore, the fact that early sculptures imported from Mathurā have been discovered in Gandhāra, while no similarly ancient sculptures from Gandhāra have been found in Mathurā, supports the claim for a Mathurān origin of the Buddha image.[93]

Thus, based on current art historical evidence, it is widely believed that the first Buddha images can be dated to the first century BCE. However, if literary references to the earliest Buddha images made after the death of Śākyamuni are to be trusted, the first Buddha image may have been made as early as within a generation or two after his death.[94] In any case, determining the precise date and location of the creation of the first Buddha images is not critical to the purposes of this study. But, establishing that we need not look outside the Indian cultural tradition for the initial impetus for the invention of the Buddha image has important implications for our understanding of the formation of the Buddha image tradition.

Bhakti

Although the stylistic conventions of Western art, via Gandhāra, exerted an influence on the art-historical development of the Indian Buddha image, the original

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[92] Ibid., 381-90.

[93] Ibid., 393-94. For representative examples of Mathurān and Gandhāran style Buddha images, see “Figure 2” and “Figure 3” below, 45).

[94] Huntington, J. “The Origin of the Buddha Image,” 36-43. Huntington surveys a number of literary accounts that are “unembellished” with regard to fantastical narrative details. The time frame mentioned here is derived from two similar accounts of Buddha images found in Tāranātha’s *History of Buddhism in India* and the *Biography of Dharmsvāmin*.

formation of the Buddha image tradition appears to have been based in the native Indian religious and cultural tradition. Coomaraswamy proposes that the initial production of Buddha images was informed by the development of the *bhakti* movement in Indian religions. The notion of *bhakti* refers to a personal relationship of loving devotion to a *Bhagavan*. The *bhakti* movement was common to many of the native religions of India, including *nāga* and *yakṣa* cults, Jainism, and Hinduism.[95] The early standing Buddha image, in particular, owes its stylistic and iconographic conventions to earlier Indian images of *yakṣa*, which, in turn, were based on an ancient Indian idealized conception of the regal figure.[96] The image of the seated Buddha, on the other hand, found its basis in the ancient seated posture of the yogic adept or teacher, which was representative of a form of religious practice that predated and informed the development of both Buddhism and Jainism.[97] Thus, the iconographic conventions of the Buddha image took shape largely in accordance with general Indian conceptions of the ideal royal and religious figures, whose benevolence and majesty inspired the loving devotion of *bhakti*.

Bhakti is closely associated with the theistic cults of India and the notion of faith (*śrāddha*).[98] Though the pilgrimage and stūpa veneration practices recommended in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* (see above, 34-36) may have been a basis for the growth of the *bhakti* movement in a Buddhist context, the idea of *bhakti*, especially as it is expounded in the most famous *bhakti* scripture, the *Bhagavadgītā* (ca. 4th century BCE), is not

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[95] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 297-300. For a definition of *Bhagavan*, see above, 18n38. For a definition of *nāga*, see above, 17n35. *Yakṣa* are benevolent local nature deities that may, however, become vengeful. Female *yakṣa* (*yakṣinī*) are particularly associated with trees.
[96] Ibid., 303-305.
[97] Ibid., 301.
[98] Ibid., 297; Gokhale, "*Bhakti* in Early Buddhism," 16-17.

without a very pronounced visual component as well.[99] According to Stephen Beyer, the concept of *bhakti*, as it is expressed in the *Bhagavadgītā*, "is not the rather vague emotional dependence and devotionalism denoted by the term in current usage, but rather a specific contemplative activity, the iconographic visualization of the god – precisely the meditative technique that forms the episodic core of the Buddhist vision quest."[100] In the *Bhagavadgītā*, *bhakti* and *smṛti* are closely associated as methods for controlling the mind and focusing on the deity that is the object of devotion. Kṛṣṇa, the central Hindu deity of the *Bhagavadgītā*, in a strikingly similar vein to Pure Land practice, recommends that his devotees (*bhakta*) bear him in mind (*smṛti*) at the moment of death in order that they may come to him after death; leading Beyer to conclude that, "for the *Bhagavadgītā*, *smṛti* or *anusmṛti* are the *bhakti* of the moment of death."[101]

Conclusion

Though the earliest forms of showing reverence to the Buddha after Śākyamuni's *parinirvāṇa* were centered on the veneration of material reminders of his presence in the form of relics, rather than practices that centered on the vision of the Buddha, images of the Buddha also came to be considered worthy of veneration. Images' merit as object of veneration is the result of their ritual consecration, which is centered on an eye-opening ceremony that is indebted to *darśana* related beliefs and practices, but which is also

[99] Ibid.; ibid., 20; Beyer, "Notes on the Vision Quest," 333-34.

[100] Beyer, "Notes on the Vision Quest," 333. The "vision quest" referred to here is analyzed by Beyer primarily in the context of Buddhist *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, but he finds extensive parallels for it in the Pure Land sūtras, *Bhagavadgītā*, and other Buddhist texts.

[101] Ibid., 333-34. For a discussion of *smṛti* and *anusmṛti*, see above, 29-31. The Pure Land practice referred to here is the widely known practice of calling Amitābha to mind at the moment of death to ensure rebirth in Sukhāvatī.

frequently augmented by the insertion of Buddhist relics into the image. The question of how long after the *parinirvāṇa* of Śākyamuni the tradition of making and venerating images of the Buddha began remains a matter of some dispute, but there is evidence to suggest that it may have begun earlier than scholars have traditionally been willing to believe, due to the influence of the theory of aniconism. With the reassessment of the theory of aniconism, however, the assumption of a relatively late image tradition of foreign inspiration is far less certain. On the contrary, the similarities of the Buddhist eye-opening ceremony, and the iconographic and stylistic conventions of early Buddhist art with their earlier Hindu counterparts, as well as their probable common basis in the pan-Indic *bhakti* movement, provide strong circumstantial evidence in support of the antiquity of Buddhist image production and veneration.

For the purposes of this study, the important point to highlight is the conceptual continuity between the beliefs and practices that informed both Buddhist and earlier Indian image production and veneration traditions. If there was, in fact, a period after the death of Śākyamuni during which figurative images of the Buddha weren't made, there appears to be little evidence to suggest this would have had any doctrinal or conceptual foundation in either the Buddhist or greater Indian ideological traditions. Also, the conceptual continuity between the notion of devotion (*bhakti*), and mindfulness (*smṛti*) and recollection (*anusmṛti*) is of particular interest, as these latter concepts were integral to some of the most important developments in Buddhist doctrine and practice after the death of Śākyamuni that are the subject of this study. We will resume our discussion of these concepts in the next chapter.



Figure 2:
Sculpture of a seated Śākyamuni Buddha with attendants.
This sculpture is representative of the early Mathurān style of the Buddha image
(see p. viii for image details)

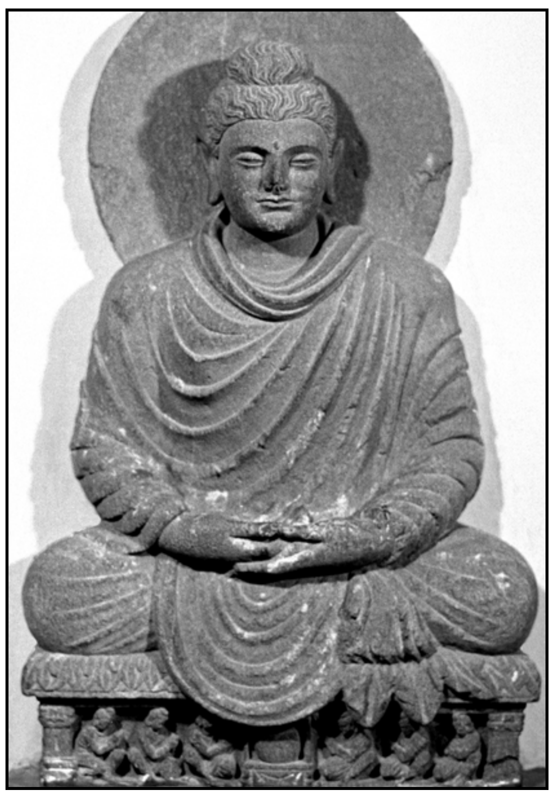


Figure 3:
Sculpture of a seated Buddha.
This sculpture is representative of the early Gandhāran style of the Buddha image
(see p. viii for image details)

CHAPTER 4

Calling the Buddha to Mind and Visualizing the Bodies of the Buddhas

Buddhadarśana

Darśana, as a general idea in Indian religious thought and practice, has already been discussed (see above, 27-29), and there is little of an explicitly conceptual or theoretical nature that differentiates it in the context of Buddhist thought, either from the Hindu understanding of *darśana*, or from other, related Buddhist concepts. Komine Michihiko notes that issues connected with *buddhadarśana*, particularly after Śākyamuni's *parinirvāṇa*, came to be fundamental throughout Buddhism, and intertwined with the concepts of Buddha recollection (*buddhānusmṛti*) and Buddha contemplation (*guānfó*; see below, 51-57).[102]

Ōminami Ryūshō asserts that throughout the history of Buddhism the most ardent wish of the Buddhist faithful has been to actually meet the Buddha, hear his teaching, practice meditation and attain perfect Buddhahood. And he broadly defines *buddhadarśana* as the actions and experiences of the Buddhist faithful in satisfying this wish. From this straightforward meaning, however, *buddhadarśana* also came to refer to

[102] Komine, "Kenbutsu ni tsuite," 750; see also, Ōminami, "Kenbutsu," 25-26.

perception of, and eventual union with the Buddha in meditation.[103] Yamabe Nobuyoshi notes that *buddhadarśana* appears throughout the Buddhist literature, and, that in Mahāyāna literature, the experience of *buddhadarśana* is described as something that "happens when a practitioner's religious fervor reaches its peak *for any reason*. Seeing the Buddha … is certainly a visionary experience, but it is not necessarily a result of systematized visualization."[104]

Though *buddhadarśana* is very important as a general concept throughout Buddhism, it appears that it has not been the subject of extensive philosophical or doctrinal exegesis within the Buddhist tradition. Instead, it remains a rather broadly defined, amorphous concept. My reason for addressing *buddhadarśana* here is that, as noted above, it is one of a core group of closely related concepts that are central to the doctrinal and philosophical development concerning seeing the Buddha.

Buddhānusmṛti

Buddhānusmṛti, on the other hand, has been the subject of extensive exegesis in the Buddhist tradition. As we saw above in Chapter Two, the Buddha was featured as one of many objects of recollection (*anusmṛti*) in a number of sūtras from the Pāli *nikāya*s, as well as the Chinese *āgama*s.[105] In one of the two sūtras from the *Aṅguttaranikāya* referred to in Chapter Two, *buddhānusmṛti* is mentioned simply as something that "conduces to

[103] Ōminami, "Kenbutsu," 25; see also, Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 158-59.
[104] Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 162 (emphasis added).
[105] Harrison, "*Buddhānusmṛti*," 36; see above, 29-31.

Nibbāna."[106] The other sūtra, however, provides greater detail on how to recollect the Buddha, as well as the benefits that it provides. The Buddha instructs Mahānāma:

> "You should recollect the Wayfarer thus: The Exalted One is an arahant, fully enlightened, perfect in knowledge and practice, a Welfarer, a world-knower, an unsurpassed trainer of men to be trained, teacher of devas and mankind, an awakened one, Exalted One is he. At such time, Mahānāma, as the Ariyan disciple thus calls to mind the Wayfarer, at that time his heart is not obsessed by lust, not obsessed by malice, not obsessed by delusion; at such time his heart is firmly fixed on the Wayfarer; with upright heart the Ariyan disciple wins the joyful thrill of the weal, wins the joyful thrill of the dhamma, wins the joyful thrill of joy that goes with the dhamma; in one so joyous is born zest; in one of zestful mind the body is calmed; he whose body is calmed experiences happiness; the mind of the happy man is concentrated."[107]

Thus, recollection of the Buddha actually consists of calling to mind the qualities of the Buddha, with the result that the defilements (*kleśa*) are eradicated, and one becomes established in a joyful, zestful mind conducive to concentration.

The concept of *buddhānusmṛti* is further elaborated in two nearly identical commentaries to the Pāli *nikāya*s by Buddhaghoṣa and Upatissa (368-410).[108] Of the two, Buddhaghoṣa's commentary, the *Visuddhimagga*, features the more extensive description of the practice of *buddhānusmṛti*:

> Recollect the special qualities of the Enlightened One, as follows: 'That Blessed One is such since he is accomplished, fully enlightened, endowed with [clear] vision and

[106] AN 1.16: v. 1, 27 (translated by F.L. Woodward).

[107] AN 11.2 – i: v. 5, 209-10 (translated by F.L. Woodward). The list of the Buddha's qualities here is comprised of a list of ten epithets that became relatively standard in early Buddhism. A more standard list of the ten, in both terminology and content, is: 1) thus-gone (*tathāgata*); 2) worthy (*arhat*); 3) fully and completely awakened (*samyaksambuddha*); 4) accomplished in knowledge and virtuous conduct (*vidyācaraṇasampanna*); 5) well-gone (*sugata*); 6) knower of worlds (*lokavid*); 7) unsurpassed guide for those who need restraint (*anuttaraḥpuruṣadamyasārathih*); 8) teacher of gods and humans (*śāstādevamanuṣyānām*); 9) awakened (*buddha*), and; 10) blessed (*bhagavat*) (Griffiths, *On Being Buddha*, 60, 209n3).

[108] These are Buddhaghoṣa's *Visuddhimagga*, and a work by Upatissa that is commonly known by the reconstructed Pāli title, *Vimuttimagga*, but which is only extant in a Chinese translation titled *Jietuodao lun* 解脱道論. The similarity of the content of these two works makes it clear that their is some historical relationship between them, however, the nature of that relationship is unclear; see the "Introduction" in Bapat, *Vimuttimagga and Visuddhimagga*, xv-lix.

> [virtuous] conduct, sublime, the knower of worlds, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, the teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed'[109]

This explanation is followed by lengthy descriptions of each of the Buddha's qualities mentioned (i.e., "accomplished," "fully enlightened," etc.). Though the qualities listed here are quite similar to those listed in the *Aṅguttaranikāya* sūtra that was just quoted, some of the benefits that are said to derive from their recollection differ in noteworthy ways from the earlier sources. In addition to attaining faith, mindfulness, understanding, merit, happiness, etc., the monk who has devoted himself to the practice of *buddhānusmṛti*:

> comes to feel as if he were living in the Master's presence. And his body, when the recollection of the Buddha's special qualities dwells in it, becomes as worthy of veneration as a shrine room. … When he encounters an opportunity for transgression, he has awareness of conscience and shame as vivid as though he were face to face with the Master.[110]

Here we find, in addition to the traditional Buddhist ethical and meditative attainments, a pronounced emphasis on being in the presence of the Buddha, and feeling as if one were "face to face" with the departed Buddha.

A couple of distinctive characteristic of Upatissa's version of the commentary, commonly known as the *Vimuttimagga*, are worth mentioning. First, there is a distinct emphasis placed on the process of sustaining recollection that foreshadows the Pure Land emphasis on the constant practice of *buddhānusmṛti*: "The yogin remembers the Enlightened One, the Blessed One, … He recollects, repeatedly recollects, recollects again and again, does not forget to recollect on these [qualities]. … He practices right recollectedness. Thus is the recollection of the Buddha. The undisturbed dwelling of the

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[109] Vs 2.7.2: v. 1, 206 (translated by Bikkhu Ñyāṇamoli; brackets in Vs).
[110] Vs 2.7.67: v. 1, 230 (translated by Bikkhu Ñyāṇamoli).

mind … – this is called the practicing of it."[111] Also, the *Vimuttimagga*, citing the *Nettisutta* (or *Netrisutara*), makes explicit reference to images; although the available English translations differ in their interpretation of this passage. N.R.M. Ehara et al., translate the sūtra quotation as, "if a man wishes to meditate on the Buddha, he should worship Buddha images and such other objects."[112] But P.V. Bapat renders it: "If a man desires to reflect upon the Buddha, he is worthy to be revered like a place with the image of the Buddha."[113] This second interpretation may be preferable, especially if we understand it as corresponding to Buddhaghoṣa's assertion, cited above, that the practitioner's body becomes as worthy of veneration as a "shrine room," which is all but synonymous with "a place with the image of the Buddha."[114] In any case, this reference makes it clear that image veneration was at least viewed with approbation, if not specifically endorsed, in these early canonical works on *buddhānusmṛti*.

However, as Yamabe concludes, there is no evidence of a visualization practice associated with *buddhānusmṛti* in either of these texts. But, Yamabe does find evidence for a nascent association of visualization with *buddhānusmṛti* in the *Samādhirājasūtra*. Here visualization of Buddhas is advocated as preparation for the dissolution of the visualized image in order to gain insight into emptiness, the true nature of the Buddha:

> One who calls Tathāgatas to mind in terms of their appearances (*ākāra*) becomes tranquil in sense faculties and mind, undeluded in mind, always concentrated, and is like an ocean with learning and wisdom. … If a person grasps onto the measurements of the qualities of the Buddhas, that person's mind will go mad. There is no measurement for the

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[111] Vm 8.3: 140 (translated by N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera; brackets in Vm).

[112] Ibid.: 141n2.

[113] In Bapat, *Vimuttimagga and Visuddhimagga*, 62.

[114] See Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 131-32. Yamabe concurs with this line of reasoning, and provides us with a citation of the original Chinese passage that is the source of the confusion: *ruò rén yù niànfó, qí kě gōngjìng rú fóxiàng chù* 若人欲念佛，其可恭敬如佛像處。

> immeasurable. … A wise man, knowing the conditioned as unconditioned, and removing thought of images (*nimitta*); he is established in the imagelessness and knows that all dharmas are empty. One who is established in the Dharma Body knows that all the existences are non-existent. Removing the [image] by the thought of non-existence, one does not see the Lord of the Victor in the physical body. … He knows the Buddha, sees the Buddha, and examines the Buddhas in terms of the Dharma. Staying in this samādhi, he salutes the Buddhas with great power. … Even when one suffers in sickness and feels the [painful] sensation before death, one does not abandon the mindfulness (*smṛti*) directed to the Buddha …[115]

Though clearly not an endorsement of the visualization of the Buddha (or Buddhas) for its own sake, in comparison to the *Visuddhimagga* and *Vimuttimagga*, there is a definite shift in emphasis away from recollecting the qualities of the Buddhas, which are here described as "immeasurable," and toward a form of recollection centered on visualization.

Further elaboration of this trend toward visualization in the concept *buddhānusmṛti* is to be found primarily in Chinese texts, some of which, though, are known to be translations of earlier Sanskrit texts. So, I will forgo further discussion of *buddhānusmṛti* for the time being, and turn to the translation into Chinese of the key concepts being discussed here.

Jiànfó 見佛*, Niànfó* 念佛*, and* Guānfó 觀佛

In Chinese, *buddhadarśana* is translated as *jiànfó* 見佛, and *buddhānusmṛti* is translated as *niànfó* 念佛, but there is a third, related term in Chinese texts for which there is no clear Sanskrit equivalent; that is, *guānfó* 觀佛, which I am glossing in English

[115] In ibid., 138-40 (brackets in Yamabe).

as "Buddha contemplation."[116] Though the word *guān* 觀, when found independently, is used to translate the Sanskrit *vipaśyanā* (insight), especially in cases where it is paired with *śamatha* (calming), the compound **buddhavipaśyanā*, which would then correspond to *guānfó*, is not known from any Sanskrit texts.[117]

Yamabe Nobuyoshi, after a detailed analysis of many of the Sanskrit reconstructions for *guān*(*-fó*) that have been proposed by scholars, contends that "(*vy*)*avalokana*, meaning 'a preliminary observation in meditation'" may be a possible Sanskrit equivalent of *guān*, despite the fact that this would result in a Sanskrit equivalent for *guānfó*, **buddhāvalokana*, that is also not found in any known Sanskrit text.[118] Yamabe's reason for this preference is that he finds similarities between the visualization practices described in Sanskrit and Pāli texts that use *avalok-* (Pāli: *olok-*) and the visualization practices described in Chinese texts dealing with *guānfó*, and especially the so-called "Visualization (*Guān* 觀) Sūtras."[119] In particular, he notes the similarity

[116] These terms are frequently encountered in scholarly literature written in Wade-Giles Romanization as *chienfo*, *nienfo*, and *kuanfo*, respectively. In Japanese they are *kenbutsu* 見仏, *nenbutsu* (or *nembutsu*) 念仏, and *kanbutsu* (or *kambutsu*) 観仏, respectively.

[117] Soothill and Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, s.v. "觀"; Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 169-70. The closest correlate Yamabe finds to **buddhavipaśyanā* is *buddhasamudravipaśyanā*, from the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*, which Buddhabhadra translates using *jiàn* 見.

[118] Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 168-77, 181-82. Yamabe's philological analysis is too detailed to adequately summarize here, but other proposed Sanskrit equivalents for *guān* that he discusses include *jñā-*, *paś-*, *dṛś-*, *dhyāna*, and *bhāvanā*.

[119] Ibid., 40n2, 41. I will continue to refer to these as the "Visualization Sūtras," as that seems to have become the fairly widely accepted nomenclature in the scholarly literature, although I don't think "visualization" is an accurate translation "*guān*." The "Visualization Sūtras" refer to a number of Chinese sūtras that have the character *guān* 觀 in their titles, of which there are six extant: 1) *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* 觀佛三昧悔經 ("The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Meditation of Visualization of the Buddha"), translation attributed to Buddhabhadra (Fotuobatuoluo 佛陀跋陀羅); 2) *Guan Wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經 ("The Sūtra on the Visualization of Amitāyus"), attributed to Kālayaśas (Jiangliangyeshe 彊良耶舍; 3) *Guan Milepusa shangsheng doushuaitian jing* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經 ("The Sūtra on the Visualization of Maitreya Bodhisattva Being Reborn in Tuṣita"), attributed to Juqu Jingsheng 沮渠京聲; 4) *Guan Puxianpusa xingfa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經 ("The Sūtra on the Visualization of Samantabhadra

between the *guānfó* practices found in Chinese texts and the "taking the image" (*nimitta*) practices found in, for example, the *Visuddhimagga*, in which *olok-* is used to refer to the act of looking at objects of meditation. Furthermore, in the *Jietuodao lun* (*Vimuttimagga*), the use of *guān* corresponds to the use of *olok-* in the *Visuddhimagga*.[120] The *Visuddhimagga* describes the method for taking the image (or "apprehending the sign," as it's phrased in this translation) in the following terms:

> He [i.e., the monk] should open his eyes moderately, apprehend the sign and so proceed to develop it. … he should develop it by apprehending the sign (*nimitta*), keeping his eyes open moderately, as if he were seeing the reflection of his face (*mukha-nimitta*) on the surface of a looking-glass. … It should be adverted to now with eyes open, now with eyes shut. And he should go on developing it in this way a hundred times, a thousand times, and even more than that … When, while he is developing it in this way, it comes into focus as he adverts with his eyes shut exactly as it does with his eyes open, then the learning sign is said to have been produced.[121]

Yamabe finds similar methods to these described in the "Visualization Sūtras" *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* and *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, in particular, and believes that, in the context of these sūtras, *guān* should be understood as a visualization process that begins with looking at a statue.[122]

Alexander Soper, too, emphasizes the importance of images to the concept of *guān*:

Bodhisattva"), attributed to Dharmamitra (Tanmomiduo 曇摩蜜多; 5) *Guan Xukongzangpusa jing* 觀虛空藏菩薩經 ("The Sūtra on the Visualization of Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva"), attributed to Dharmamitra, and; 6) *Guan Yaowang Yaoshang er pusa jing* 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經 ("The Sūtra on the Visualization of the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaiṣajyarāja and Bhaiṣajyasamudgata"), attributed to Kālyaśas. Two more titles are known only from catalogues: 1) *Guan Yueguangpusa ji jing* 觀月光菩薩記經 ("The Sūtra on the Records of Visualizing Moonlight Bodhisattva"), and; 2) *Wenshou guan jing* 文殊觀經 ("The Sūtra on the Visualization of Mañjuśrī"). The existence a sūtra on the visualization of Avalokiteśvara, the title of which is unknown, is also recorded. The origins of these sūtras are obscure, but they are widely believed to be apocryphal texts compiled in Central Asia during the fifth century CE. Yamabe considers only the *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* and *Guan Wuliangshou jing* to actually feature fully developed programs of "*guān* meditation" (see ibid., 40, 54-58).

120 Ibid., 7-14, 178.

121 Vs 2.4.27-30: v. 1, 129-30 (translated by Bikkhu Ñyāṇamoli).

122 Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 12-14, 170.

> *Kuan* [i.e, *guān*] describes here a special kind of mystical adventure, which can have become possible in the Buddhist world only after the cult of images had been accepted and drawn deep into the center of religious experience. … *Kuan* means a systematic building-up of visual images, each as complete and precise as possible, in a sequence from the simple toward the complex. In following this step-by-step advance the practitioner was certainly aided by his memories of Buddhist art. The *sutras* more than once recommend the man-made icon or statue as a natural first step toward realizing the beauty and glory of divinity. If these mental pictures were correctly formed, on the basis of iconographic rules, they were already approximations of the truth; and so to cross the frontier from reason to ecstasy brought no absolute change, but rather an immense widening of the field of vision, and *seeing* instead of mere visualizing.[123]

Adopting a less normative approach, Mai Cuong claims that in the "Visualization Sūtras" *guān* is associated with the related concepts of *jiàn* 見 ("to see, meet, appear") and *xiǎng* 想 ("to think, suppose, imagine, believe, wish for, miss, remember with longing"), and that it "can mean by turns anything from a revelation given by a Buddha, vision gained through attainment of "divine sight" (*tianyan* [天眼]), vision beheld in deep meditative absorption, to miracle visions encountered on the deathbed."[124] Julian Pas maintains that *guān* and *xiǎng* are related, but distinct concepts, both of whose meanings are included in the word *niàn* 念. He accuses Soper of conflating *guān* and *xiǎng*, countering that the "systematic building-up of visual images" should be referred to as *xiǎng*, and not *guān*.[125]

The meaning of the word *guān*, outside of a Buddhist context, appears to have remained fairly stable throughout history. A comparison of the definitions found in dictionaries of modern and ancient Chinese yields similar results. *Guān* is defined as "to watch, look at, gaze at, view, observe, show," and "a sight." However, modern

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[123] Soper, "Literary Evidence," 144 (italics in Soper).

[124] Mai, "Visualization Apocrypha," 347

[125] Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī*, 203-204. The passage from Soper that Pas cites can be found quoted above, 48-49 (Pas's quotation starts from after my ellipses). Pas also asserts that it is fallacious to characterize the *guān* sūtras as a unified group of sūtras all dealing with "visualization" simply because they all feature the character *guān* in their title.

dictionaries also include the meanings "to inspect, point of view, outlook, concept."[126] A review of the entries beginning with *guān* 觀 in Nakamura Hajime's *Bukkyōgo Daijiten* indicates that *guān* was frequently used to translate Sanskrit terms with meanings that range from knowledge and awareness to inspection, investigation and examination. Also, it is often used in compounds with other characters that similarly refer to mental states and cognitive processes.[127] While this can't be taken as proof that Buddhist and Indian thought was responsible for the incorporation of connotations related to thought and cognition into the meaning of *guān*, I would like to speculate that perhaps the original meaning of *guān* was extended, at least in part, in order to accommodate Indian and Buddhist visual conceptions of knowledge (as discussed above in Chapter Two) as well as meditative visualization techniques. The original meaning of *guān* does lend itself to this application, at least in so much as the concepts of "to watch" and "to observe" imply a more cognitively engaged form of looking than simply "looking at" or "seeing" (as in, e.g., *jiàn* 見). In light of both its general and Buddhist use, I would characterize the core meaning of *guān* as "looking at or observing with the intent to know or understand," where "looking" can be understood in either a literal or metaphorical sense. In Buddhist

[126] DeFrancis, *ABC Chinese-English Comprehensive Dictionary*; Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*; Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* and *A Dictionary of Early Zhou Chinese*; and Wu, *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary*, s.vv. "guān" and "guàn."

[127] Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyōgo Daijiten*, s.vv. "觀" and following (v. 1, 195-99). For example, "觀" (*guān*; Japanese: *kan*), itself, is used to translate *vipasyanā* ("insight into the truth"), *parīkṣā* and *vicaya* (synonyms meaning "inspection," "examination," "investigation," etc.), and *vicāra* ("deliberation"), among others; see also the entries for, for example, "観想" (Chinese: *guānxiǎng*; Japanese: *kansō*; Sanskrit: *bhāvanā* – "mental or meditational cultivation"), "観知" (*guānzhī*; *kanchi*; *prajñā* – "wisdom" or "insight"), "観智" (*guānzhī*; *kanchi*; *jñāna* – "knowledge"), "觀慧" (*guānhuì*; *kanne* – "wisdom based in meditation"), "觀解" (*guānjiě*; *kange* – "understanding the truth through contemplation"), and "觀法" (*guānfǎ*; *kanbō* – "contemplation of the dharma, or truth").

usage, *guān* tends to be employed to refer to mental or meditative processes that have an object, whether it be abstract knowledge or a concrete visual image.[128]

Returning to our discussion of *guānfó* and its related concepts, *jiànfó* and *niànfó*, it is thought that *guān* was utilized in the clarification of these other two concepts. For example, *guān* is thought to have been compounded with *niàn*, forming the word *guānniàn* 觀念, in order to distinguish between *smṛti* and *anusmṛti*'s two senses of recollecting the Buddha, and holding an image of the Buddha in mind.[129] Also, with the rise of the belief in multiple Buddhas, including contemporaneous Buddhas, in the Mahāyāna tradition (see below, 63-72), seeing the Buddha (*jiànfó*) came to be considered a real possibility that could be gained from the practice of Buddha recollection (*niànfó*). In this way, the concepts of *jiànfó* and *niànfó* became intertwined, and *guānfó* was used to distinguish methodical meditative techniques for seeing the Buddha.[130] However, *guānfó* is also sometimes used interchangeably with *jiànfó* in Chinese translations of Sanskrit terms for seeing the Buddha. Nevertheless, according to Ōminami Ryūshō, the usage of these two terms in Chinese does suggest a difference in nuance, with *guānfó* referring to the meditative visualization that leads to a vision of the Buddha, while *jiànfó* refers to the attainment of a vision of the Buddha that is the result of *guānfó*.[131] On the other hand, as the visual aspect of *niànfó* became increasingly prominent, the distinction

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[128] I am basing this judgment, in part, on the entries that include *guān* 觀 in Soothill and Hodous's *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, which are frequently translated using "meditation on… ," "contemplation of … ," and the like: s.vv. "二空觀," "人空觀," "八不正觀," "三種三觀," "大圓鏡智觀," "不淨觀," "中觀," "中輩觀," "五大觀," "六大觀," "六種觀," "日想觀," "布字觀," "因緣觀," "法身觀," "假觀," "現觀," "實相觀," "觀察," "五相成身觀," "心觀," "四尋思觀," "無所觀," "滅觀" "觀察門," and "觀心."

[129] Matsumoto, "Kannen," 33.

[130] Sueki, "Nenbutsu," 131-32.

[131] Ōminami, "Kenbutsu," 36,

between *niànfó* and *guānfó* also became increasingly indistinct. However, "*niànfó* in general is a wider term comprising any practice of 'calling the Buddha to mind,' including but not limited to, visualization."[132]

Unfortunately, this is as clear as the present scholarship allows me to be regarding the relationship of these three terms. The confusion and ambivalence among them suggests to me that there is no Sanskrit equivalent for *guānfó*. Rather, I think it is probable that it is a Chinese coinage intended to clarify the ambiguity between recollection and visualization that had already accrued to the Sanskrit term *buddhānusmṛti*. This conceptual ambiguity likely caused no problems in India, where it was a native linguistic development, but for the Chinese who were trying to assimilate it, I think that it is safe to assume that it caused some confusion. Ultimately, it appears that *guānfó* does not clarify this ambiguity so much as merely name it. Of the two most frequently proffered English glosses for *guānfó*, I prefer "Buddha contemplation" to "Buddha visualization" because the latter does not have the connotations of thinking or understanding that I think are necessary components of *guān*'s meaning. I think that "Buddha observation" may be an even more apt translation, in spite of the slight nuance of clinical detachment and paternalism that "observation" can sometimes convey.

Visualizing the Buddha's Body: The Thirty-Two Major Physical Marks

We've noted that, with the death of Śākyamuni, seeing the Buddha was only possible through meditative visualization. However, thus far there's been little discussion of how the Buddha might appear in visualization. Assuming that the legends about the

[132] Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 126-27.

first Buddha image are fictitious, Śākyamuni's actual likeness was likely not preserved in artistic representation, and the iconographic conventions of the first Buddha images were, instead, indebted the conception of religious and regal ideals common to Indian traditions that preceded Buddhism (see above, 41-43).

However, there is also some textual bases for determining how the Buddha should appear. The doctrinal developments that helped establish how the Buddha should appear were closely intertwined with the idealization of the Buddha, and the development of the doctrine of multiple Buddha bodies in the Mahāyāna tradition. Paul Griffiths claims that the list of qualities, or "epithets," of the Buddha that comprised the objects of recollection in the earliest doctrinal definitions of *buddhānusmṛti* formed the first stage in an idealization of the Buddha that laid the groundwork for a more systematic list of the eighteen properties of the Buddha.[133] Furthermore, already implicit in the early list of epithets is a distinction between different types of Buddhas; that is, in the epithet "fully and completely awakened" (*samyaksambuddha*), there is an implicit contrast with other types of Buddhas whose enlightenment is not full and complete, which most often refers to "solitary Buddhas" (*pratyekabuddhas*) who do not teach, and thus are believed to lack

[133] Griffiths, *On Being Buddha*, 66-70. For a list of the Buddha's epithets, see above, 48n107. The eighteen properties that the Buddha has are: 1) four immeasurable states (*apramāṇa*); 2) mastery of the eight liberations (*vimokṣa*); 3) noncontentiousness (*araṇā*); 4) an awareness (*jñāna*) that comes from vows (*praṇidhi*) undertaken in the past; 5) four kinds of specific understanding (*pratisamvit*); 6) six kinds of supernatural awareness (*abhijñā*); 7) thirty-two major defining characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) and the eighty minor marks (*anuvyañjana*) of a great person (*mahāpuruṣa*); 9) four kinds of purification (*pariśuddhi*); 10) four kinds of fearlessness or confidence (*vaiśāradya*); 11) three kinds of guardlessness (*arakṣa*); 12) three applications of mindfulness (*smṛti*); 13) the elimination of propensities or tendencies (*vāsanā*) toward improper thought, speech or action; 14) lack of delusion (*asaṃmoṣatā*) regarding the needs of living beings; 15) great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*); 16) eighteen exclusive properties (*āveṇika*); 17) omniscience (*sarvajñatva*), and; 18) fulfillment of the six perfections (*pāramitā*).

the compassion and salvific efficacy of fully enlightened Buddhas.[134] This kind of inquiry into the nature of the Buddha and different types of Buddhas informed the development of the idea of different bodies (*kāya*) of the Buddha. Before discussing these developments, though, we will turn to a discussion of the Buddha's physical marks.

Listed among the eighteen properties of the Buddha is the property of having the thirty-two major physical marks (*lakṣaṇa*; see Appendix A) and the eighty minor marks (*anuvyañjana*) of a great man (*mahāpuruṣa*). Like the iconographic conventions that informed the early physical depiction of the Buddha in Indian art (see above, 41-43), the thirty-two marks of the great man are believed to have been introduced into Buddhism from the pre-Buddhist, Brahmanical tradition as the Buddha became increasingly idealized. Descriptions of the thirty-two marks can already be found in several early sūtras from the Pāli *nikāya*s and the Chinese *āgama*s.[135] The eighty minor marks represent a later elaboration of the thirty-two major marks, and are not especially relevant to our present discussion.[136]

Several of the thirty-two marks are commonly featured in iconographic depictions of the Buddha, but our focus will be on the marks as objects of meditation and

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[134] Ibid., 62. The enlightenment (*bodhi*) of *samyaksambuddhas* is also frequently contrasted with that of *śrāvakas* ("hearers"), i.e., *arhats*; see Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.vv. "arhat." "pratyekabuddha," "samyaksambuddha," and "śrāvakayāna." For as discussion of the difference between Buddhas [i.e., *samyaksambuddhas*], *pratyekabuddhas*, and *śrāvakas* according the Sarvāstivādin school, see Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 50-52.

[135] Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 14, 190n54; see also, Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 315.

[136] Ibid., 32; see also, "Table 2.1," 29-31.

visualization.[137] As Griffiths notes, the thirty-two marks are entirely relevant to *buddhānusmṛti* and related practices:

> There is a connection between Buddha's perfections of appearance and the meditational practice of recalling or paying attention to (*anusmṛ-*) Buddha's physical properties. There can be little doubt that the lists of Buddha's defining marks and detailed descriptions of Buddha's appearance in the heavenly realms were used as aids to such practice; and they were also represented iconographically in painting and sculpture.[138]

Among the first to develop a specifically Buddhist doctrinal interpretation of the thirty-two marks were the Sarvāstivādins, a sect of the Abhidharma school of Buddhism. In the Sarvāstivādins' *Vibhāṣā*,[139] though it includes varying theories, there is featured the general idea that each of the thirty-two marks is the result of one hundred merits, which is equivalent to one hundred meritorious thoughts of, for example, good karma. The *Vibhāṣā*, in summary, posits that, "the merit of the Buddha is immeasurable. … It is only Buddhas who acquire the one hundred merits required for gaining one *mahāpuruṣa* mark. Thus each of the thirty-two marks is endowed with one hundred merits."[140]

This understanding of the thirty-two marks is exemplified in the *Banzhou sanmei jing*, a sūtra that is also commonly known by its abbreviated Sanskrit title, *Pratyutpannasamādhisūtra*. According to Paul Harrison, this sūtra, which was one of the earliest known Mahāyāna sūtras to be translated into Chinese, describes a form of meditation called "the meditation of direct encounter with the Buddhas of the present" (*pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi*), which is a developed form of *buddhānusmṛti*. In fact, in other sources this meditation is referred to as

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[137] Mrozik, *Virtuous Bodies*, 65. According to Mrozik, the most commonly depicted marks in Buddhist iconography are the wheels on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, the webbed fingers, the turban-like protuberance on the top of the head (*uṣṇīṣa*), and the tuft of hair between the eyebrows (*ūrṇā*).

[138] Griffiths, *On Being Buddha*, 100.

[139] "Compendium (of the Sarvāstivāda)"

[140] Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 37. This is Xing's synopsis of the contents of the *Vibhāṣā*.

buddhānusmṛtisamādhi ("meditation on the recollection of the Buddha").[141] In this sūtra the Buddha is described in the following terms:

> The Buddha's complexion is as radiant as gold. His body has thirty-two marks, and each mark has one hundred blessings or merits. He is fine and upstanding, as if made out of heavenly gold. … You should make images of the Buddha, perfect in various ways and beautiful in various ways, with countenances as radiant as gold.[142]

And, later in the sūtra the Buddha gives the following instructions for recollecting the Buddhas:

> "Just as I, the Buddha, am now preaching sutras in your presence, bodhisattvas should think that the Buddhas are all standing before them; they should call to mind in full the Buddhas, who are upright, whom everyone wants to see. They should think of each and every mark, recalling that no one can see the tops of the Buddhas' heads. They should think of all this in full, and they will see the Buddhas. They should think: 'I myself will also be like this, I will also acquire such bodily marks as these, and will also attain such morality and meditation as these."[143]

The equation found here between morality and bodily appearance is far from anomalous or isolated in Buddhist discourse. Rather, the bodily form that one gains upon rebirth within the six realms (*gati*) of Buddhist cosmology is the result of one's good or bad karma from previous lives, and the attractive appearance of the body is both an indication of one's karmic merit, as well as an impetus for ethical conduct in those who look at it.[144] Even though human birth is thought to be meritorious in Buddhism because it provides the opportunity of becoming a Buddha, the human body is still impure when compared to the bodily and ethical perfection of the Buddha. In fact, as a counterpart to the thirty-two major physical marks of the Buddha, the impermanence and impurity of thirty-two

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[141] Harrison and McRae, trans. and intro., *The "Pryatutpanna Samādhi Sutra*," 1-2; Harrison, "Commemoration," 220. The *Banzhou sanmei jing* was translated by Lokakṣema in 179 CE.

[142] BS 3: 24 (translated by Paul Harrison).

[143] BS 7: 35 (translated by Paul Harrison).

[144] See Chapter 4, "Virtuous Bodies," in Mrozik, *Virtuous Bodies*, 61-81. The six realms of rebirth are: 1) the gods (*deva*); 2) humans; 3) demons (*asura*); 4) animals; 5) hungry ghosts (*pretas*), and; 6) hell (*naraka*).

component parts of the human body are also endorsed as subjects of meditation in the Buddhist tradition.[145]

Though the thirty-two major physical marks of the Buddha are associated with specific merits that the Buddha had attained, they were also part of a more general trend of glorification of the Buddha in the Buddhist tradition, wherein the perfection of his appearance became an overwhelming inspiration for faith and religious practice. The glorification of the Buddha and close connection between visualization of the Buddha and morality are well illustrated in the *Guanfo sanmei hai jing*, in which the Buddha is asked by his father:

> "Today in this world I am seeing the Buddha's phenomenal body, though I see only its exterior and cannot observe what lies within. [Even] when Siddhārtha was in my palace [as a new-born child], the physiognomists all recognized His thirty-two distinguishing attributes. But now that He has become Buddha, His radiance is so much brighter that it exceeds the past by hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions. After the Buddha's Nirvāṇa the beings of later ages will say: 'How are we to visualize the Buddha's body with its phenomenal attributes, and know the Buddha's radiance and His habitual measurements?'"[146]

The Buddha answers at length, enumerating a list of objects of visualization that includes, not only the thirty-two major physical marks, but also things like his navel, heart, brain and veins, as well as his appearance when walking, standing, sitting, and during significant events of his historical life. Systematic visualization of the Buddha's body, progressing either from the top of the head to the feet, or from the feet to the top of the

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[145] Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, 17-18; the thirty-two components of the human body are: 1) hair of the head; 2) hair of the body; 3) nails; 4) teeth; 5) skin; 6) flesh; 7) sinews; 8) bones; 9) marrow; 10) kidneys; 11) heart; 12) liver; 13) pleura; 14) spleen; 15) lungs; 16) colon; 17) intestines; 18) stomach; 19) feces; 20) bile; 21) phlegm; 22) pus; 23) blood; 24) sweat; 25) fat; 26) tears; 27) lymph; 28) saliva; 29) snot; 30) synovia; 31) urine, and; 32) brain. Strong cites T.W. Rhys Davids, trans., *The Questions of King Milinda*, 2 vols. (New York: Dover [1890-94], 1963).

[146] Cited in Soper, "Literary Evidence," 186 (brackets in Soper). Siddhartha Gautama is the name of the historical figure who would become Śākyamuni Buddha. The physiognomists referred to here are those who foretold that Siddhartha would become either a Buddha or a universal monarch (*cakravartin*).

head, is also advocated.[147] And elsewhere in the sūtra, penitence and the expiation of sin are portrayed as the result of, or prerequisite for, visualization of the Buddha:

> One meditates on the rays from the white tuft between the Buddha's eyebrows [i.e., *ūrṇā*], from one to seven days, upon which the above-mentioned four types of sins will be lightened. After three weeks of this one's sins will gradually disappear; after seven weeks one will be wholly purified. Should there be some monk who has committed an offense not having the nature of sin, and who when he [tries to] visualize the ūrṇā rays, can see only blackness, let him enter a stūpa and observe the statue's ūrṇā for from one to three days, clasping his hands and weeping while he studies with all his heart. Then he may go before the brothers and tell of his previous offense. …
>
> …any being whatsoever who is desirous of visualizing a Buddha image, will first go into a Buddha stūpa with a good, fragrant plaster and various earths, and plaster over the floor until it is clean. Then to the extent of his ability he will burn incense and scatter flowers in adoration of the Buddha image. He will tell of his past crimes and adore the Buddha in penitence.[148]

Visualizing the Buddhas' Bodies: Toward the **Trikāya** *Doctrine*

Questions concerning the purity or impurity of the Buddha's body formed the basis for the development of the doctrine claiming that there are multiple forms of the Buddha's body (*kāya*). The earliest conception of different bodies of the Buddha arose within the context of a disagreement between the Sarvāstivāda and Mahāsāṃghika sects over the interpretation of passages in early sūtras claiming that, "the Tathāgata was born in the world, abided in the world, and yet was not defiled by the worldly dharmas."[149] According the Mahāsāṃghikas, this passage indicated that the physical body (*rūpakāya*) of the Buddha is pure, but the Sarvāstivādins maintained that only first part of this

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[147] Ibid., 186-88.

[148] Ibid., 189 (brackets in Soper).

[149] Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 20. Xing cites from the *Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經 (Sanskrit: *Samyuktaāgama*), but notes that the same passage can also be found in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*; see 193n7.

passage refers to the physical body, while the second part refers to the "spiritual body" (*dharmakāya*) of the Buddha.[150]

The fact that this division between the *rūpakāya* and *dharmakāya* had significant implications for the concept of seeing the Buddha is apparent from the many contrasts between seeing the Buddha and seeing the dharma that we discussed above, in Chapter One. In the context of this early two-body conception of the Buddha, the *dharmakāya* is conceived of as the embodiment of the entirety of the Buddha's teachings,[151] an understanding that sheds light on the reciprocal associations between seeing and knowing (see above, 24-29), and seeing the Buddha and seeing the dharma in the Buddhist tradition.

In the later Mahāyāna tradition the concept of the *dharmakāya* became much more expansive and grandiose. By the time the *trikāya* ("three body") doctrine was formalized by the Yogācārins, the *dharmakāya* had come to be conceived of as spatially and temporally infinite, beyond discrimination, discernment or perception, and ontologically identical with the dharmas that comprise all of existence.[152] Lewis Lancaster notes that many art historians suggest that the creation of Buddha images found its inspiration in the glorification of the Buddha that is characteristic of fully developed *trikāya* doctrine. However, positive references to making images can be found in Mahāyāna literature that predates the *trikāya* doctrine. Specifically, in an early version of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema (2nd century

[150] Ibid., 20-21.
[151] Ibid., 69-75.
[152] Ibid., 75-100.

CE), which is thought to be the earliest extant sūtra of the Mahāyāna tradition, the body of the Buddha and Buddha images are described in the following terms:

> [*Dharmodgata said*:] "The Buddha's body is like the images which men make after the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha. When they see these images, there is not one of them who does not bow down and make offering. These images are upright and handsome; they perfectly resemble the Buddha and when men see them they all rejoice and take flowers and incense to revere them. O Noble One, would you say that the Buddha's spirit is in the image?" *The Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita replied*: "It is not there. The image of the Buddha is made (only) because one desires to have men acquire merit." *Dharmodgata said*: "… If there is a man who has seen the Buddha in person, then after Nirvāṇa he will remember the Buddha and for this reason make an image, because he wants men in this world to revere the Buddha and receive the merit of the Buddha." … "…If men constantly see the Buddha performing meritorious deeds, then they too will constitute a perfect Buddha body, and be endowed with wisdom, the (power of bodily) transformations, flying and in sum all the auspicious marks of a Buddha. The constitution of a perfect Buddha body is like this."[153]

Lancaster maintains that a there is not yet a multiple body conception of the Buddha in this version of the sūtra. Although it is true that it does not use the terms *rūpakāya* and *dharmakāya*, the terms *buddhakāya* and *tathāgata* are used in this sūtra in ways that indicate that they are comparable in meaning. The *buddhakāya*, though physical and governed by causes and conditions, is empty, and merely a display for the sake of sentient beings, while the Tathāgata is one who realizes the suchness (*tathatā*) of all dharmas.[154] *Tathatā* is a term that is first used in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, with a meaning that is basically synonymous with emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*); that is, the underlying nature of all dharmas. And, the Tathāgata is persistently equated with *tathatā*, which constitutes, according to Xing Guang, a nascent conception of the *dharmakāya*.[155]

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[153] Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon," 287-90 (italics in Lancaster). The version of the text referred to here is called the *Daoxing banruo jing* 道行般若經.

[154] Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 80-81.

[155] Ibid., 75-80.

In the *Prajñāpāramitā*[156] literature, of which the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*[157] is an example, the idea that the *dharmakāya*, and not the *rūpakāya*, is the proper object of seeing the Buddha is strongly emphasized. Ōminami Ryūshō characterizes this as a revival of the equation in early Buddhist texts of seeing the Buddha with seeing the dharma. One example that he cites from the *Jingang bore jing*,[158] which is strongly reminiscent of our previous quotation from the *Theragāthā* (see above, 11), should be sufficient to illustrate his point: "If someone sees me by way of my form, or seeks me by way of my voice, this person practices heresy. To see the Tathāgata is impossible."[159]

But, if the quote above from *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* regarding image making is typical of *Prajñāpāramitā* thought, their denigration of the Buddha's physical form (*rūpa*) does not extend to its representation in images. The reason for this may be that the meaning of the term *rūpa* is somewhat ambiguous in Buddhist thought. Anupa Pande points out that, "in pre-Buddhist usage, *rūpa* generally had the sense of perceptible form signifying something beyond it, that is, it had the sense of an expressive sign or symbol rather than a self-contained or self sufficient sensuous form." *Rūpa* also came to denote the sensuous properties of form, as well as the more abstract scientific properties of form, in various schools of pre-Buddhist Indian philosophy. But in the metaphysics of early Buddhist scholastic schools, such as the Abhidharma, *rūpa* tended to lose its sense of symbol or sign of an invisible, transcendent entity.[160] With the introduction of

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[156] "Perfection of Wisdom"
[157] "Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses"
[158] "Diamond Sūtra"
[159] Ōminami, "Kenbutsu," 31. This is my translation of Ōminami's Japanese translation: 若し色をもってわれを見、音声をもってわれを求むるは、この人、邪道を行ず。如来を見ること能わす。
[160] Pande, "A Note on the Concept of *Rūpa*," 179-81.

transcendent forms of the Buddha in the *trikāya* doctrine, the older sense of *rūpa* regained currency in Buddhist thought, and, Pande proposes, helped lay the conceptual groundwork for the Buddha image tradition.[161] It seems likely that the *rūpakāya* was denigrated in the Buddhist tradition not merely because it was a "form-body," but because it was a particular type of form; the human body, which, unlike an image, is comprised of the impure components referred to above (see 62n145), and subject to the corruption, suffering and decay of this defiled world (*sahā*).

In the *trikāya* doctrine, the *rūpakāya* came to be eclipsed by the concept of *nirmāṇakāya*. Though the fully formed conception of the *nirmāṇakāya* as a manifestation body of the Buddha only appeared in Dharmarakṣa's (3rd-4th centuries) third century CE translation of the *Rulai xingxian jing*,[162] its foundations can be found in earlier notions of the supernatural powers (*ṛddhi*) that a meditater attains by progressing through higher levels of meditative awareness (*dhāyna*). These supernatural powers include the ability to conjure a "mind-made body" (*manomayakāya*), multiply one's body, and transform one's body.[163] All of these powers came to be incorporated in the concept of the *nirmāṇakāya*, which is translated as "manifestation body," "emanation body," and "transformation body," among others.

The beginning of the reinterpretation of the form-body (*rūpakāya*) of the Buddha as a manifest-body (*nirmāṇakāya*) can be attributed to the Mahāsāṃghikas. As already mentioned above, the Mahāsāṃghikas contradicted the Sarvāstivādins in maintaining that

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[161] Ibid., 185-86.

[162] "Sūtra on the Appearance of the Tathāgata"

[163] Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 136-39. The *Rulai xingxian jing* 如來興顯經 corresponds to Chapter Thirty-two of the *Huayan jing* 華嚴經 (Sanskrit: *Avataṃsakasūtra*).

the *rūpakāya* was not defiled by the world. Rather, they claimed that the Buddha purified both his body and mind together. In addition, the Mahāsāṃghikas claimed that the *rūpakāya* was limitless (though not omnipresent), impervious to decay, and incredibly strong, and that the *rūpakāya* of the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, was a transformation body. Therefore, though they did not use the term *nirmāṇakāya*, nor even develop a multi-body conception of the Buddha, the ideas of the Mahāsāṃghikas appear to have formed the foundations for the *trikāya* doctrine's notion of the *nirmāṇakāya*.[164]

The final member of the *trikāya* doctrine, in addition to the *dharmakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya*, is the *saṃbhogakāya*, which is generally translated as "reward body," "enjoyment body," or "recompense body," among others. The origins of the *saṃbhogakāya* concept are unclear, but it may have been devised in order to justify the increasingly extravagant claims made about the nature of the Buddha's body among adherents of the Mahāyāna tradition. The term first appears in *Mahāyānasūtralaṃkāra*, where it is characterized as the body that a bodhisattva achieves by virtue of the incalculable merits accumulated on the bodhisattva path for the sake of his or her own enjoyment, as opposed to the *nirmāṇakāya*, which is a manifestation for the benefit of others. In Chinese, *saṃbhogakāya* was translated as both "enjoyment body" and "reward body,"[165] with the latter meaning becoming more prevalent in later translations. The subsequent evolution of the concept of *saṃbhogakāya* developed according to this

[164] Ibid., 59-61.
[165] I.e., *zì shòuyong shēn* 自受用身 and *tā shòuyong shēn* 他受用身, respectively.

bifurcation between a "body of enjoyment for the benefit of oneself" and a "body of enjoyment for the benefit of others."[166]

The development of the *trikāya* doctrine was far more complex than is indicated by our summary here, but for our present purposes there is no need to go into any greater detail. Rather, I would like to discuss some corollary aspects of the doctrine that are relevant to the themes discussed in this study. First, the existence of the *nirmāṇakāya* and *saṃbhogakāya* make it possible for the Buddha, or Buddhas, to be immediately present to the Buddhist devotee; unlike Śākyamuni Buddha as a *rūpakāya* (as defined according to Sarvāstivādin doctrine), who has passed into *parinirvāṇa*, and unlike the *dharmakāya*, which is generally thought of as a totally abstract universality that is completely beyond perception.

A second aspect of the *trikāya* doctrine, which is concomitant with the first, is the idea that it is possible for multiple Buddhas to exist simultaneously in separate world-systems (*lokadhātu*). Though the existence of multiple world-systems has always been posited in Buddhist cosmology, early Buddhist texts do not profess the presence of Buddhas in any world-system other than our own (i.e., Jambudvīpa).[167] In Mahāyāna Buddhism, since it is taken as axiomatic that multiple Buddhas cannot exist in the same world-system, and that there are numerous bodhisattvas practicing on the path toward the attainment of perfect Buddhahood, it is generally believed that there must be Buddhas in other world-systems. This understanding gives rise to the notion of Buddha-fields

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[166] Ibid., 101-103, 132-35.

[167] Ibid., 62-66. Xing notes that references to contemporaneous Buddhas cannot be found in the *nikāya*s, though they are found in the corresponding Chinese *āgama*s, where they must represent later interpolations.

(*buddhakṣetra*), worlds that have been purified by the meritorious practice and the fulfillment of religious vows on the part of either an advanced bodhisattva, or a *nirmāṇakāya* or *saṃbhogakāya* Buddha.

As with descriptions of the Buddhas themselves, descriptions of the splendors of their purified lands plays a prominent role in the context of the exegeses of *buddhānusmṛti* in Buddhist texts.[168] And, the idea that it is possible to be reborn into a Buddha-field, or "Pure Land" (*Jìngtǔ* 浄土), as they came to be called in Chinese Buddhism, had an enormous impact on some of the most widely practiced forms of Buddhism that developed in the East Asian tradition. The development of concepts related to seeing the Buddha in the context of the most popular Pure Land tradition in East Asia; that of Amitābha Buddha, will be discussed in the following chapter.

First, however, there is a final aspect of the *trikāya* doctrine that I would like to discuss. That is, the fact that the ideas of the *nirmāṇakāya* and *saṃbhogakāya* represent a thorough re-conceptualization of how Buddhas appear in the world. The *trikāya* doctrine was founded on an analysis of the function (*vṛtti*) of the Buddha, which was part of a six-fold analytical framework that was standard in Buddhist doctrinal exegesis. According to this analysis, only the *dharmakāya* is considered the real or true body of the Buddha that hypostatizes the essence of Buddhahood, while the *nirmāṇakāya* and *saṃbhogakāya* represent the *dharmakāya*'s functional aspect in manifesting the Buddha's perfection to sentient beings.[169] These manifestations are necessary because, in itself, the Buddha's

[168] Griffiths, *On Being Buddha*, 119-25, 129-33.
[169] Ibid., 75, 81-82. The other five analytical categories for inquiring into an objects nature are analyses of its essential nature (*svabhāva*), cause (*hetu*), result (*phala*), activity (*karman*), and properties (*yoga*).

perfection (i.e., the *dharmakāya*) is infinite, eternal, changeless and beyond perception. Thus, the *dharmakāya* must accommodate itself to the capacities of sentient beings through functioning as an appearance or manifestation, with the end result that any form of the Buddha that is perceptible to sentient beings necessarily lacks any real ontic properties. On the contrary, according to Griffiths's analysis, all properties of the Buddha's functional bodies (i.e., the *nirmāṇakāya* and *saṃbhogakāya*) are relational:

> The only properties Buddha has in its bodies of magical transformation [i.e., *nirmāṇakāya*] that are of interest to the digests [i.e., *śāstra*s] are apparently relational properties, properties of the form *seems to S to be P*, … This is indicated (though not stated) by the vocabulary used in the digests to describe the bodies of magical transformation. Verbs of appearance or manifestation are common, most often causatives of the root *dṛś-* …, and such verbs necessarily require an object, someone or something for whom or to whom the appearance occurs, they thus indicate relational properties. I am tempted to claim that such apparently relational properties are the only properties that Buddha can be said to have in its bodies of magical transformation.[170]

Griffiths goes on to qualify somewhat the last part of this statement, but he draws similar conclusions to the ones quoted here in regard to the *saṃbhogakāya*, as well.[171]

In light of the preceding analysis of the *trikāya* doctrine, it appears that among the eventual consequences of the attempts to resolve the conflict over whether the nature of the Buddha is best sought in his form (*rūpa*) or his teaching (dharma) is the thorough incorporealization of the Buddha when understood as existing in a form that is capable of being perceived by sentient beings, as well as a corresponding reification of the Buddha when understood as identical to the abstract truth realized in his teachings. This incorporealization even extends to the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, who is the only Buddha who was known historically in a human form. The relevance of this

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[170] Ibid., 96-97 (italics in Griffiths).
[171] Ibid., 140-42.

understanding of the Buddha to the tradition of Buddha visualization is clear. As Griffiths succinctly summarizes:

> All actions of the Buddha, whether they appear to occur in a four-continent world like this one [i.e., Jambudvīpa] or in a golden Buddha-field adorned with vast and imaginative floral arrangements, are representations in the minds of living beings whose occurrence is explicable without remainder in terms of the needs of those beings.[172]

Though the concepts of the *nirmāṇakāya* and *saṃbhogakāya* tell us little about how to visualize the Buddha, or the actual appearance of the Buddha, they do provide a metaphysical justification for practices that have the objective of seeing the Buddha at a time when, conventionally speaking, no "corporeal" or "historical" Buddha exists.

Conclusion

In this chapter we explored many of the doctrinal developments in the Buddhist tradition after the *parinirvāṇa* of Śākyamuni Buddha that contribute to our understanding of how it was considered possible among the Buddhist faithful to see the Buddha after he was no longer physically present, at least according to a conventional understanding of his physical presence. Though the doctrinal developments we've discussed here are too broad and ubiquitous in the Buddhist tradition to allow for an exhaustive treatment of them in this study, I have tried to illustrate some of the correspondences between the doctrinal explications of methods for visualizing the Buddha, and of the nature of the Buddha.

One telling similarity is that both doctrinal traditions have their basis in the same early lists of the Buddha's qualities, or epithets, which were part of a general trend in Buddhism that increasingly idealized the Buddha. The qualities mentioned in these lists

[172] Ibid., 138.

are almost entirely abstract qualities dealing with the Buddha's perfection of knowledge, morality, and meditative attainments, and thus would seem to offer little in the way of guidance in formulating a conception of either the Buddha's physical nature or appearance. The one exception to this is the thirty-two major and eighty minor bodily marks of the great man that came to be attributed to the Buddha early in the Buddhist tradition. These marks, as well as the more general excellence of physical appearance attributed to the Buddha, are symbols of the ethical perfection he attained through practice in both his historical life as Śākyamuni, and his previous lives, and they play important roles in meditative visualization and the inspiration to enter the Buddhist path.

On the other hand, however, neither these marks, nor any notion of physical appearance, perfect or otherwise, are ever attributed to the real Buddha, or *dharmakāya*, as the concept developed in the context of the *trikāya* doctrine. As the epithets of the Buddha increasingly attested to the omniscience and omnipotence of the Buddha, the Buddha's body also came to be conceived of as spatially and temporally limitless, incorporeal, and beyond the direct perception of sentient beings. Under these circumstances, the question of how it's possible for a Buddha to appear in the world became a significant concern of the *trikāya* doctrine. The solution was to construe all Buddhas accessible to human perception, including the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, as manifestations, or appearances, of the *dharmakāya*. Thus, on the one hand the Buddha's physical appearance became conceived of primarily as a system of signs and symbols of the Buddha's perfection, while on the other hand, the physical nature of the Buddha became conceived of as a thoroughly incorporeal manifestation; little different from an

apparition. In light of this understanding of the Buddha, the distinction between a meditative visualization of the Buddha and a vision of the “real” Buddha all but disappears; an appearance of the Buddha in a visualization being effectively the same as the manifestation of the “real” Buddha.

CHAPTER 5

Seeing the Buddha Amitābha in the East Asian Pure Land Tradition

The Doctrinal Foundations of Pure Land Buddhism

Up to this point, we've been discussing ideas about seeing the Buddha that it is probably safe to regard as the common heritage of the entire Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition. Now, we will turn to a discussion of how these ideas developed within a specific Buddhist tradition: the Pure Land tradition of East Asia. The selection of this tradition is the result of our more or less arbitrary decision to focus on Buddhist traditions that have seeing the Buddha in person as their primary objective. The Pure Land tradition centered on the goal of rebirth in the Buddha Amitābha's Sukhāvatī is the most prominent and widespread example of this form of Buddhism.

Though the Indian origin of the Pure Land tradition is evident from the existence of Sanskrit versions some of its foundational texts, extant textual and archaeological evidence for a continuing Indian tradition centered on a cult of Amitābha is sparse.[173] In East Asia, however, a Pure Land tradition centered on Amitābha and his paradise of

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[173] See Fujita, "Pure Land Buddhism in India," 8-11; Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine*, 3-4; Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī*, 8-11. It is believed that the oldest Pure Land sūtras were likely to have been written in Gandhārī (Northwest India) or a related dialect, there is little evidence of practices centered on Amitābha in the travel records of early Chinese pilgrims to India (e.g., Faxian and Xuanzang), and early extant archeological or textual evidence for an Amitābha image tradition is lacking. Although, the nature of the archaeological evidence that is extant is suggestive of the existence of a more prolific iconographic tradition in perishable materials (John Huntington, personal communication).

Sukhāvatī flourished, becoming one of the most widespread Buddhist traditions in China and Japan.

One of the earliest known sūtras to mention Amitābha is the *Banzhou sanmei jing*, which we've already discussed in the context of the visualization of the thirty-two physical marks of the Buddha (see above, 57-63). Though this sūtra is not included among the three sūtras that came to be designated as canonical in the Pure Land tradition, as we noted above, it did play an important role in the development of the concept of *buddhānusmṛti*, and it was frequently cited by the leading exponents of Pure Land Buddhism in China.[174] For example, Lushan Huiyuan (334-416), who is credited with giving rise to the Pure Land movement in China by founding a worship society devoted to Amitābha on Mount Lu, derived his method of meditation primarily from the *Banzhou sanmei jing*. Huiyuan's society was established in 402, when he, along with 123 disciples, made a vow in front of a statue of Amitābha on Mount Lu to be born together in Sukhāvatī. Huiyuan's disciples would go on to propagate his visualization practice throughout China after his death.[175]

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[174] Harrison and McRae, trans. and intro., *The "Pryatutpanna Samādhi Sutra*," 2-3. Harrison proposes that the fact that Amitābha is only one of many Buddhas advocated as objects of recollection and visualization may be the justification for the *Banzhou sanmei jing* not being designated a Pure Land sūtra.

[175] See Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, 106-108; Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine*, 13, 15; Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 79-83. Huiyuan's understanding of method of visualizing the Buddha may be gleaned from a response he received from Kumārajīva to his question regarding the meditation advocated in the *Banzhou sanmei jing*, in which Kumārajīva distinguishes three kinds of visualization of the Buddha: "(1) Bodhisattvas who have acquired the heavenly eye and ear, or the supernatural power of going anywhere at will, can personally see the Buddha and ask him questions; (2) Those who have no such powers but are continually mindful of Amitābha and other Buddhas can visualize and ask him questions; (3) Those who practice the *nien-fo*, even if they have not yet severed worldly desires, can see an image of the Buddha or visualize the Buddhas." (see Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 82).

Of the three sūtras considered canonical in the East Asian Pure Land tradition, the oldest is roughly contemporary to the *Banzhou sanmei jing*. The two Pure Land sūtras that are still extant in Sanskrit are both titled the *Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra*, though they are entirely different sūtras. The earliest extant Chinese translation of the longer of these two, referred to in English as the "Longer (or Larger) Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra," is dated to the latter half of the second century CE, and the earliest extant translation of the "Shorter (or Smaller) Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra" is dated to 402 CE. And the final member of the triad, the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* is known only in a single Chinese version dated to the second quarter of the fifth century CE.[176] In regard to the exegesis of Pure Land doctrine, the "Longer Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra" and the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* are the more important sūtras. The former sūtra enumerates the vows that Amitābha took in front of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja in a previous life as the bodhisattva Dharmākara, the fulfillment of which established his purified land (*buddhakṣetra*) of Sukhāvatī. It also provides instructions for how to be reborn in Sukhāvatī. The latter sūtra provides systematic and detailed instructions for visualizing Amitābha, his attendant bodhisattvas, and his Pure Land, and

[176]See Fujita, "Pure Land Buddhism in India," 6-8; Inagaki *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 55-57; Nattier, "The Indian Roots of Pure Land Buddhism," 189-90, 200n29; Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī*, 8-12; Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine*, 13, 15-17. The "Longer Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra"was translated into Chinese twelve times, though only five translations are extant. The authorship, and thus date, of the earliest translation of this sūtra had been a matter of debate, but current scholarly consensus attributes the earliest translation to Lokakṣema, and dates it to the latter half of the second century CE. A later translation (with the Chinese title *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經), which is dated to either 252 CE, and attributed to Saṃghavarman (Kangsengkai 康僧鎧), or to 421 CE, and attributed to Buddhabhadra and Baoyun 寶雲, came to be considered authoritative in the Pure Land tradition. The "Shorter Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra" was translated twice, and the earlier version (with the Chinese title *Amituo jing* 阿彌陀經), which was translated by Kumārajīva (Jiumoluoshi 鳩摩羅什) in 402 CE, is considered to be the authoritative version. The *Guan Wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經, which is attributed to Kālayaśas, is thought to be an apocryphal sūtra that was likely composed in Central Asia, and not translated from an Indian language original. It is also counted among the so-called "Visualization Sūtras" due to the presence of the character for *guān* 觀 in its title (see above, 52-53n119).

it enumerates a hierarchy of nine ranks, divided between three levels, into which it is possible to be reborn in Sukhāvatī.[177]

From Buddhānusmṛti *to* Niànfó 念佛 *and* Nenbutsu 念仏

Buddhānusmṛti is, by any measure, the most important concept in Pure Land Buddhist practice. In the previous chapter, we mentioned that *buddhānusmṛti* was translated into Chinese as *niànfó* 念佛. However, as is well known, *niànfó* came to be primarily associated with vocal recitation of the name of Amitābaha Buddha ("*Námó Āmítuófó*" 南無阿彌陀佛). Discussion of the change in the meaning of *buddhānusmṛti* has been reserved to the present chapter because it was primarily the result of changes in Pure Land doctrine in China, rather than difficulties or misunderstanding in its translation from Sanskrit to Chinese. That being said, however, the meaning of the Chinese character (i.e., *niàn* 念) used to translate the "*anusmṛti*" of *buddhānusmṛti* may have had connotations that associated it with the spoken word and reading aloud.[178]

Examples of spoken invocations of the name of the Buddha for salvific effect can be found in early Buddhist sūtras, but in these cases it is not associated with

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[177] The selection of these three sūtras as canonical in the Pure Land tradition was only made in the twelfth century by the Japanese Pure Land patriarch Hōnen 法然, so it isn't accurate to project this kind of orthodoxical thinking onto earlier, Chinese Pure Land thinkers. However, it is fair to say that these three texts were central to the development of Pure Land doctrine in both China and Japan.

[178] Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī*, 261. In "ancient times," "念" was used as a loan character for the word meaning "to announce," and in "classical times" its meaning included "to recite" and "to read." Modern dictionaries also include among its meanings "to read aloud" and "to chant." Sueki Fumihiko claims that this latter meaning can be found in Chinese historical records from at least as far back as the Eastern (Later) Han dynasty (25-220) (Sueki, "Nenbutsu," 131). However, the original meaning to the character appears not to have had these connotations (see Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* and *A Dictionary of Early Zhou Chinese*, s.v. "niàn").

buddhānusmṛti, or with any type of regimented meditative practice.[179] In fact, there appears to be little evidence of an explicit association of recitation with *buddhānusmṛti* in texts prior to those of the Pure Land tradition. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, before it took on visual connotations and a focus on visualizing the body of the Buddha and its physical marks, *buddhānusmṛti* centered on the epithets of the Buddha. This original connotation of *buddhānusmṛti* was never entirely lost, and evidence for its continuation can be found in later sūtras' references to "mindfulness of the name" of the Buddha, although whether or not this can be regarded as evidence of recitation or chanting practices that predate the Chinese Pure Land tradition is debatable.[180]

However, in two works that are considered seminal to the Pure Land tradition, the association of chanting the Buddha's name with *niànfó* (*buddhānusmṛti*) is explicit. The first is Nāgārjuna's (ca. 2nd century CE) *Shi zhukun posha lun* (commonly known by the reconstructed Sanskrit title *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣāśāstra*). In a chapter in which he posits his famous distinction between easy and difficult paths of bodhisattva practice, which would also become a central tenet in the development of Pure Land doctrine, he endorses recitation of the Buddha's name:

> There are innumerable ways of entering the Buddha Dharma. Just as there are in the world difficult and easy paths – traveling on foot by land is full of hardships and traveling in a boat by water is pleasant – so it is with the paths of the bodhisattvas. … If a bodhisattva wishes in his present body to enter the stage of non-retrogression [*avinivartanīya*] and realize the highest perfect bodhi, he should think on those Buddhas of the ten directions and recite their names. … If a man contemplates me [i.e., Amitābha], recites my name, and takes refuge in me, he will instantly enter the state of perfect

179 Atone, "Shan-tao," 135, 192nn2-5. Atone's examples are drawn from the *Mahaparinirvāṇasūtra*, the *Avadānasūtra*, and *Aṅguttaranikāya*.

180 Atone, "Shan-tao," 136-44; Moriyama, "The Gate of Praise," 242-43; Yamabe, "*The Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi*," 143-46. Moriyama believes that chanting the Buddha's name was practiced in India, and Yamabe seems inclined to believe that there was an association between *buddhānusmṛti* and chanting the name in Indian texts, while Atone does not.

> enlightenment (*anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi*) and subsequently attain the highest perfect bodhi.[181]

Like the *Banzhou sanmei jing*, the *Shi zhukun posha lun* refers to many Buddhas other than Amitābha, and, therefore, is not considered to be strictly a Pure Land text. Vasubandhu's (420-500) *Jingtu lun*,[182] on the other hand, is considered a canonical treatise on the "Longer Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra," and it is foundational to Pure Land practice in China. This text establishes "five contemplative gates" (*wǔ niàn mén* 五念門) as essential to Pure Land practice. These are the gates of: 1) worship; 2) praise; 3) aspiration; 4) contemplation; 5) transfer of merit.[183] The practice of "praise" is explained as follows: "We praise [his name] through vocal action *[vāk-karma]*: we chant the name of the tathāgata because, by observing these practices as truly as they should be, we seek to bring about the unity [between those practices] and what his name-essence and illumination-wisdom [stand for]."[184] The results obtained form observing the practices recommended in each of the fives gates are given at the end of the *Jingtu lun*. They are portrayed in spatial terms as a progressive approach and entrance into the Pure Land, with the final gate allowing one to rejoin the suffering beings caught in the cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) in order to transfer one's merit to them.[185] As a result, the practice of

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[181] In Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 62-63. I've slightly modified Inagaki's translation in accordance with Atone's translation (see Atone, "Shan-tao," 145). Attribution of this text to Nāgārjuna, and the existence of a Sanskrit original, is uncertain (see ibid., 210n82).

[182] This is the popular, shortened name for the *Wuliangshou jing youbotishe yuansheng ji* 無量壽經優波提舍願生偈, which is also commonly known by its reconstructed Sanskrit title, *Sukhāvatīvyūhōpadeśa*.

[183] JL: 278 (translated by Kiyota Minoru); Moriyama, "The Gate of Praise," 241-42. The object of worship (1. *lǐbài mén* 禮拜門) and praise (2. *zàntàn mén* 讚歎門) is Amitābha. Aspiration (3. *zuòyuàn mén* 作願門) refers to the vow to be reborn in the Pure Land. The objects of contemplation (4. *guānchá mén* 觀察門) are the merits of the Pure Land. The transfer of one's merit (5. *huíxiàng mén* 迴向門) to others is a common bodhisattva practice.

[184] Ibid. (translated by Kiyota Minoru; brackets in JL).

[185] JL: 289-90 (translated by Kiyota Minoru); Moriyama, "The Gate of Praise," 246-47.

chanting the Buddha's name, as it is expounded in the *Jingtu lun*, has generally been understood as a preliminary and subordinate practice that is meant to assist in the meditative attainments that culminate in the transfer of one's merit.[186] Though recitation is undeniably incorporated into Pure Land practice in the *Jingtu lun*, the overall emphasis here is still on meditation and visualization. The great majority of the text is devoted to explaining the method for practicing the fourth gate; that is, visual contemplation (*guānchá* 觀察) of the seventeen merits of the Pure Land, the eight merits of the Buddha Amitābha, and the four merits of the bodhisattvas.[187]

In the Pure Land sūtras themselves, there are only two explicit references to the recitation of the Buddha's name, which are both found in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*.[188] In the explanation of the nine ranks of rebirth, the Buddha states that beings who commit various evil acts without feeling remorse, but who do not slander the Mahāyāna sūtras, can, upon meeting a wise teacher before death, be born into the highest rank of the lowest level of rebirth if he or she extinguishes his or her evil karma by hearing the names of the Mahāyāna sūtras and calling the name of the Buddha: "*Námó Āmítuófó*."[189] The same thing, in essence, is said of those who are destined to be reborn in the lowest rank of the lowest level of rebirth in the Pure Land, except that the sins committed are specifically enumerated as the five grave offences and ten evil acts, no mention is made of any sūtras,

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[186] Moriyama, "The Gate of Praise," 251-52; Payne, "The Five Contemplative Gates," 242-43. Payne argues that five gates actually represent a single visualization practice (*sādhana*), with the penultimate gate representing the consummate stage.

[187] JL: 279-85 (translated by Kiyota Minoru); Payne, "The Five Contemplative Gates," 244-45.

[188] Atone, "Shan-tao," 143.

[189] GW 28: 345-46 (translated by Inagaki Hisao).

and the number of recitations is specified at ten. Also, chanting the Buddha's name is recommended only "'If you cannot concentrate on the Buddha, …'"[190]

Credit for establishing the recitation of the Buddha's name as a completely independent Pure Land practice is generally attributed to Shandao (613-681), one of the most pivotal thinkers in the Pure Land tradition. However, Tanluan (476-542) who is considered to be the first major exponent of Pure Land doctrine in China, was the first to emphasize recitation by augmenting the importance of the second contemplative gate of Vasubandhu's *Jingtu lun* in his commentary on that work, titled *Wangsheng lun zhu*.[191] Tanluan compares the name of the Buddha to Daoist spells, claiming that the Buddha's name is the same as the Buddha, and not a reference to the Buddha. Also, he attests that the way to ensure that one's invocation practice accords with the truth of the correspondence of the name with the essence of the Buddha is through genuine, unitary and constant faith (*xìnxīn* 信心).[192]

Along with an emphasis on faith, Tanluan's innovations include interpreting Nāgārjuna's distinction between difficult and easy paths to salvation in terms of the distinction between "other-power" (*tālì* 他力) and "self-power" (*zìlì* 自力), which he derives from the eleventh, eighteenth, and twenty-second vows of Amitābha from the

[190] GW 30: 348 (translated by Inagaki Hisao). The "five grave offences" likely refer to the early Buddhist prohibitions against: 1) patricide; 2) matricide; 3) killing an *arhat*; 4) injuring a Buddha, and; 5) causing discord in the *saṃgha*. The "ten evils acts" likely refer the evils enumerated in early Buddhist scriptures: 1) killing; 2) stealing; 3) sexual misconduct; 4) lying; 5) flattery or irresponsible speech; 6) defamation; 7) duplicity; 8) greed; 9) anger, and; 10) holding mistaken views.

[191] "Commentary to the Treatise on the Pure Land." This is an abbreviated version of the full title, *Wuliangshou jing youbotishe yuansheng ji zhu* 無量壽經優波提舍願生偈註. In Japan it is also known by the even more abbreviated titles *Jōdo ron chū* 浄土論註 and *Ron chū* 論註.

[192] WLZ: 218-21 (translated by Roger J. Corless).

"Longer Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra."[193] And Tanluan's successor, Daochuo (562–645), associates the "easy path" exclusively with the Pure Land path and reliance on the vows of Amitābha, and emphasizes the superiority of the easy path during the current, degenerate age of the Buddhist dharma (*mòfǎ* 末法), in which the "five corruptions" (*wǔ zhuó* 五濁) flourish, making the "difficult path" impossible to follow. Daochuo especially recommends the recitation of the Buddha's name as effective for the age of *mòfǎ*.[194]

Both Daochuo and his disciple Shandao emphasized that *niànfó* and the Pure Land path were for the sake of ordinary beings (*fánfū* 凡夫), as those who had progressed further on the Buddhist path were thought to be virtually non-existent in the age of *mòfǎ*, as well as least in need of the saving power of Amitābha's vows. In particular, Amitābha's eighteenth vow, from the "Longer Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra," came to be singled out in the Pure Land tradition as offering the most expedient means for attaining rebirth in the Pure Land. This vow is stated by Amitābha (as the bodhisattva Dharmākara) as follows:

> May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any among the throng of living beings in the ten regions of the universe should single-mindedly desire to be reborn in my land with joy, with confidence, and gladness, and if they should *bring to mind this aspiration for even ten moments of thought* and yet not

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[193] Corless, "T'an-luan," 123-24. The distinction between "self-power" and "other-power" is attributed to Vasubandhu's *Daśabhūmikaśāstra*, but Tanluan's innovation was to associate it with Nāgārjuna's "easy" and "difficult" paths (see Hsiao, "The Life and Teachings of T'an-Luan," 83-85).

[194] AJ 1.1: 2-4; AJ 3.1: 74-77 (translated by George E. Shibata). The concept of the "degenerate (lit: "latter" or "final") age of the dharma" (*mòfǎ*) refers to the idea that history progresses through a succession of stages after the death of the Buddha wherein the dharma that he taught gradually disappears, and, therefore, the practice of the Buddhist path becomes increasingly difficult. For a discussion of the ideas of *mòfǎ* and *wǔ zhuó*, both as they were interpreted by Daochuo and in the Buddhist tradition at large, see Chappell, "Tao-Ch'o," 132-59, 151-212. The five corruptions (*pañcakaṣāya*) are: 1) *kalpakaṣāya* (*jié zhuó* 劫濁), the corruption of the era; 2) *dṛṣṭikaṣāya* (*jiàn zhuó* 見濁), the corruption of views; 3) *kleśakaṣāya* (*fánnǎo zhuó* 煩惱濁), the corruption due to defilements; 4) *sattvakaṣāya* (*zhòngshēng zhuó* 衆生濁), the mental and physical corruption of living beings, and; 5) *āyuskaṣāya* (*mìng zhuó* 命濁), the corruption of longevity.

> gain rebirth there. This excludes only those who have committed the five heinous sins and those who have reviled the True Dharma.[195]

Perhaps due to an association with the ten recitations of the name of the Buddha recommended to the most sinful beings destined for the lowest rank of the lowest level of rebirth in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, the "ten moments of thought" of an aspiration, or vow, to be reborn in the Pure Land came to be interpreted as referring to the recitation of the name of the Buddha.[196] Daochuo and Shandao both interpret the eighteenth vow as referring to recitation of the Buddha's name, and, conversely, Tanluan interprets the ten recitations explicitly recommended in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* as equivalent to ten moments of meditative mindfulness of the Buddha.[197] As a result, the meaning of *niànfó* came to encompass both visual and recitative methods for being mindful of the Buddha, and which method is intended by any given use of the term has been subject to both sectarian and scholarly misinterpretations and misunderstandings. Only a careful, contextualized investigation of the use of *niànfó* and its related terms in the original Chinese texts, which is beyond the scope of this study, as well as the author's linguistic capabilities, could shed additional light on this ambiguity.

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[195] LS 46:167 (translated by Luis O. Gómez; emphasis added).

[196] See Gómez, *The Land of Bliss*, 247-48n17; Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 362n13. Inagaki translates the Chinese in question here (i.e., *năizhì shí niàn* 乃至十念) in accordance with the traditional Pure Land interpretation: "… call my Name even ten times …" (see Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 243).

[197] See AJ 3.2: 83; WLZ: 209; Atone, "Shan-tao," 157, 183; Corless, "T'an-luan," 125-26; Seah, "Shan-tao," 308-11. Both Dauchuo and Shandao both "misquote" the eighteenth vow as referring to recitation in the writings.

However, we can safely say that Shandao's reformulation of Vasubandhu's five contemplative gates in his *Guan jing shu*[198] had a decisive impact on the subsequent forefronting of recitative *niànfó* as the principle practice in the Pure Land tradition. Shandao distinguishes five "right practices" (*wǔ zhèngxìng* 五正行; i.e., Pure Land practices) from all other "miscellaneous practices" (*záxìng* 雜行). Shandao's five right practices are: 1) chanting sūtras; 2) contemplation; 3) worship; 4) recitation of the name, and; 5) praising and making offerings. These are the same as Vasubandhu's five gates (see above, 80-81), except that gates three and five ("aspiration" and "transfer of merit," respectively) are replaced by chanting sūtras (*dúsòng* 讀誦) and recitation of the name (*chēngmíng* 稱名); i.e., numbers one and four in Shandao's list.[199] Furthermore, among the five right practices, Shandao is generally interpreted as designating the recitation of the name as the "right and determining act" that assures rebirth in the Pure Land, while relegating the rest to auxiliary acts.[200]

The most important person to interpret Shandao in this way, from the point of view of the subsequent history of Pure Land Buddhism, is the Japanese monk Hōnen

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[198] "(Shandao's) Commentary on the *Guan* (*Wuliangshou*) *jing*." This is an abbreviated version of the full title, *Guan Wuliangshou jing shu* 觀無量壽經疏. This work is also known by the name *Guan jing si tie shu* 觀經四帖疏 ("(Shandao's) Four Volume Commentary on the *Guan* (*Wuliangshou*) *jing*").

[199] Atone, "Shan-tao," 184-87; Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 109-10; Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī*, 269-70; Seah, "Shan-tao," 297-303.

[200] Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī*, 244, 270-72. Pas offers a dissenting interpretation of Shandao, asserting that while his fourth right practice does explicitly refer to vocal recitation (*kǒuchēng* 口稱), Shandao's description of the "right determining act" only refers to continuous mindfulness of the name of Amitābha (*yīxīn zhuān niàn Mítuó mínghào* 一心專念彌陀名號), rather than explicitly to the fourth right practice or vocal recitation. Cf. Atone, "Shan-tao," 185; Chappell, "The Formation of the Pure Land Movement in China," 162; Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 109-10; Seah, "Shan-tao," 299.

(1133-1212). In the first two chapters of his major work, the *Senchaku shū*,[201] Hōnen describes how Daochuo "selected" the easy Pure Land path over the difficult "path of sages," and how Shandao "selected" the *nenbutsu* (*niànfó*) over all other miscellaneous practices. Hōnen makes it clear that he understands the *nenbutsu* practice recommended by Shandao as referring to the fourth "right practice" of reciting the name, and explicitly connects it to the "Longer Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra" by justifying this selection as being in accordance with Amitābha's eighteenth vow.[202] Without necessarily denying the efficacy of "auxiliary acts," such as the contemplations listed in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, Hōnen claims that they were established to illustrate the superiority of the rightly established *nenbutsu*, and urges that:

> anyone who desires quickly to escape from the cycle of birth-and-death should, of the two types of the excellent teaching, temporarily lay aside the Holy Path and select to enter through the Gateway of the Pure Land. If such a one should desire to enter through the Gateway of the Pure Land, of the two practices the right and the miscellaneous one should temporarily abandon the various miscellaneous practices and select to take refuge in the right practices. If one desires to exercise oneself in the right practices, of the two types of right acts, the rightly established and the auxiliary, one should set aside the auxiliary acts and resolutely select the rightly established act and follow it exclusively. The rightly established act is reciting the name of Amida [i.e., Amitābha] Buddha. Those who recite the name will unfailingly attain rebirth because it is based on Amida's original vow.[203]

As a result of Hōnen and his disciples' popularity, this understanding of *nenbutsu* became dominant in the Japanese Pure Land tradition. However, although Hōnen adamantly and unambiguously believes in the superiority of *nenbutsu* practice for attaining rebirth in the Pure Land, some of the nuances in his attitude toward the *nenbutsu*, as well as the fact

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[201] This is an abbreviated version of the full title, *Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選択本願念仏集; "Passages on the Selection of the Original Vow (of Amitābha Buddha)."

[202] SS 1, 2: 56-62, 63-71 (translated by the Senchakushū English Translation Project); see especially, 64-65.

[203] SS 12: 134; SS 16:147-48 (translated by the Senchakushū English Translation Project).

that he never attests to the total inefficacy of other Buddhist practices, tend to be overlooked among his interpreters.

Visualization in the Pure Land Tradition

In regard to the conceptual and doctrinal developments that are the subject of this study, the reinterpretation of the concept of *buddhānusmṛti* as vocal recitation, rather than meditative visualization, is unquestionably the most noteworthy trend in the Pure Land Buddhist tradition. However, this should not obscure the fact that visualization continued to play an important role in the Chinese and early Japanese Pure Land traditions. For example, we noted above that Lushan Huiyuan and his fellow Pure Land devotees made their vows to be reborn in the Pure Land in front of a statue of Amitābha, and such devotional imagery continued to play a large role in the religious life of Pure Land practitioners. Also, Shandao is said to have converted to Pure Land Buddhism upon seeing a painting of the Pure Land, and to have been a gifted artist himself who painted more than 300 images of the Pure Land, which he saw as a means to propagate the Pure Land faith. He also oversaw work on the images in the caves of the famous Longmen grottoes.[204] And, the increasing influence of Shandao and Pure Land Buddhism during the Tang dynasty (618-907) in China is reflected in the increase in the number of images of Amitābha relative to other Buddhas at Longmen during that period.[205]

Many more specific examples of the prominent role of art in the Pure Land religious practice can be found throughout the literature on Pure Land Buddhism and

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[204] Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī*, 82-83, 94-98; Seah, "Shan-tao," 124, 173-82.

[205] Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, 170-73. For an example of a Pure Land mural from the Mogao grottoes at Dunhuang (rather than Longmen) that depicts Amitābha in Sukhāvatī and scenes from the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, see "Figure 4" and "Figure 5" below, 94.

Pure Land Buddhist art. However, for an understanding of the doctrinal interpretation of visualization in the Pure Land tradition, we will first return to Shandao's writings. Shandao's exposition of the "five right practices" come in the context of his explication of the last three visualizations of the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, which are on the three levels of rebirth in the Pure Land (see Appendix B). According to Shandao's innovative interpretation of the sūtra, these visualizations comprise the "non-meditative" or "unconcentrated" good practices (*sànshàn* 散善) that represent one gate that allows entrance into the Pure Land. The other gate of "meditative" or "concentrated" good practices (*dìngshàn* 定善) is comprised of the first thirteen visualizations described in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*. These two gates are also characterized as the gates of "Buddha recollection meditation" (*niànfó sānmèi* 念佛三昧) and "Buddha contemplation meditation" (*guānfó sānmèi* 觀佛三昧), respectively.

Prior Chinese commentators on the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* had maintained that *guānfó sānmèi* is the principle topic of the sūtra as a whole, including all sixteen visualizations. Kobayashi Shōei maintains that the authors of these other commentaries, who were generally monks of other Chinese Buddhist schools, interpreted the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* according to the theoretical foundations of their own individual schools of Buddhism. Shandao's interpretation, on the other hand, focuses on the practicability of *guānfó sānmèi*, which is ultimately founded on the power of the Buddha, and on the accessibility of Pure Land rebirth for the "ordinary person" (*fánfū*).[206] The term *guānfó sānmèi* 觀佛三昧, itself, does not appear in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, though *niànfó*

[206] Kobayashi, "Zendō Daishi," 591, 596-97.

sānmèi 念佛三昧 appears twice; in the passages on the visualization of the image of Amitābha (and his attendant bodhisattvas) and on the visualization of Amitābha's "true body" (i.e., visualizations eight and nine; see Appendix B). Therefore, Shandao draws on prior sūtras, and especially the *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* and *Banzhou sanmei jing*, in formulating his conception of *guānfó sānmèi*. However, Shandao's terminology does not maintain a clear distinction between *guānfó sānmèi* and *niànfó sānmèi*, which permitted *niànfó sānmèi*, understood as based on vocal recitation, as discussed above, to become increasingly emphasized at the expense of *guānfó sānmèi* in the thought of later Pure Land exponents.[207]

A final proponent in the Pure Land tradition who endorsed a more traditional view of visual Buddha recollection is the Japanese monk Genshin (917-1042). Genshin lived approximately three centuries after Shandao and one century before Hōnen, and his text on rebirth in the Pure Land, the *Ōjōyōshū*,[208] was instrumental in the popularization of Pure Land thought in Japan. In his schematization of *nenbutsu* practice, Genshin adopts Vasubandhu's "five gates," rather than Shandao's reformulated "five right practices." Vasubandhu's five gates, as we recall, are: 1) worship; 2) praise; 3) aspiration (or vow); 4) contemplation, and; 5) transfer of merit. As noted above, it is Vasubandhu's fourth gate, "contemplation" (*guānchá* 觀察; Japanese: *kansatsu* or *kanzatsu*) that deals with visualization practices, and Vasubandhu enumerates a total of twenty-nine merits of the Pure Land as objects of visualization. Genshin, though, completely discards this scheme and offers a threefold scheme of Buddha contemplation or visualization: 1)

207 Hachiriki, "Kanbutsu zanmai to nenbutsu zanmai," 220-23.
208 "Essential Passages on Rebirth (in the Pure Land)"

Buddha-mark contemplation (*bessō kan* 別相觀); 2) general Buddha contemplation (*sōsō kan* 總相觀), which is subdivided into contemplations of the Buddha's appearance, or phenomenal aspect (*ji kan* 事觀), and true nature (*ri kan* 理觀), and; 3) simplified Buddha contemplation (*zōryaku kan* 雜略觀). The first of these contemplations describes a very traditional process of visualizing the Buddha according to his physical marks, which we've already discussed (see above, 57-63), the second posits that Amitābha possesses a three-fold body (i.e., *nirmāṇakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya*, and *dharmakāya*), and describes different forms of contemplation directed toward each body, and the third offers a progression of simpler forms of Buddha contemplation that ends with the following recommendation: "If there are those who are incapable of contemplating (*kannen* 觀念) the Buddha-marks, while dwelling on taking refuge in Him, on His coming to welcome them [upon their death], or on their own rebirth, they should single-mindedly call and reflect (*shōnen* 稱念) on the Buddha."[209] Thus, contrary to Shandao's and Hōnen's prioritization of vocal recitation as the most appropriate, because easiest, form of Buddha recollection, Genshin seems to subscribe to a more traditional understanding of the superiority of "difficult" practice, and of "easy" practice as a last resort for those of inferior capabilities.

Thus, despite the progressive emphasis placed on vocal recitation in the Pure Land tradition as a whole, visualization of the Buddha based on the instructions provided in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* continued to play a role in Pure Land Buddhism. In fact, of the Buddhist texts discussed in this study, it may be argued that the eighth visualization

[209] Andrews, *Teachings Essential for Rebirth*, 56-67.

of the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* represents the most advanced statement of doctrine in regard to the visualization process and understanding of the nature of the Buddha. The Buddha's instructions for the visualization of the image of Amitābha are as follows:

> "After you have seen this [i.e., the Buddha's lotus throne], next visualize the Buddha. Why the Buddha? Because Buddhas, Tathāgatas, have cosmic bodies [i.e., *dharmadhātukāya*], and so enter into the meditating mind of each sentient being. For this reason, when you contemplate a Buddha, your mind itself takes the form of his thirty-two physical characteristics and eighty secondary marks. Your mind produces the Buddha's image, and is itself the Buddha. The ocean of perfectly and universally enlightened Buddhas thus arises in the meditating mind. For this reason, you should single-mindedly concentrate and deeply contemplate the Buddha, Tathāgata, Arhat and Perfectly Enlightened One."[210]

Though the meaning of this passage appears to have been interpreted differently among Pure Land exponents,[211] I believe the understanding of the relation between the Buddha and the mind in contemplation of the Buddha found here indicates a sophisticated understanding of many of the doctrinal developments in the understanding of the nature of the Buddha nature and visualization that we've been discussing throughout this study.

Conclusion

Of necessity, our discussion of the Pure Land tradition has been quite circumscribed. In particular, we have limited our discussion to Pure Land thinkers who came to be considered "patriarchs" in different lineages, or "schools," of Pure Land Buddhism.[212] However, as alluded to above, other prominent Pure Land thinkers were often members of other Buddhist schools, and an examination of their thought in regard

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[210] GW 16: 330 (translated by Inagaki Hisao); see also, Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 364n17.

[211] Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 364-65nn17-18.

[212] Scholarly consensus maintains that there was no distinct "school" or "sect" of Pure Land Buddhism in China. In fact, the disciples of Hōnen were the first to form a separate school of Pure Land Buddhism (i.e., the *Jōdo shū* 浄土宗) in thirteenth century Japan. A compendium of different Pure Land lineages can be found in "Appendix 3" in Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 376-79.

to Buddha recollection and visualization would have to take into account, among other things, the influences that result from their sectarian affiliations. Such a project would require its own full-length study (or, more likely, several full-length studies).

Regardless, the dominant trend in the primary Pure Land lineage that was transmitted from China to Japan was, unquestionably, the reinterpretation of *buddhānusmṛti* in terms of vocal recitation of the name of Amitābha Buddha. Though justification for this reinterpretation can be found in the fact that the original meaning of *buddhānusmṛti* was associated with mindfulness of the epithets of the Buddha, the causes of this change in meaning are primarily to be found in doctrinal development external to the concept of *buddhānusmṛti* itself. The meaning of *buddhānusmṛti* was recursively reinterpreted within a Pure Land doctrinal framework that took it for granted that the Buddha's dharma had degenerated to the point that difficult practices like visualization were no longer feasible for the ordinary people of the world, and that the only accessible path to enlightenment was in the form of easy practices that took advantage of the "other-power" that was promised to them through the compassionate vows of great bodhisattvas and Buddhas.

It could be objected that our exploration of this understanding of *buddhānusmṛti* as vocal recitation has taken us far afield of the subject of this study. However, it should be remembered that the ultimate goal of the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* (or better, *niànfó*) was to be reborn in the Pure Land in the presence of Amitābha Buddha. The developments in Mahāyāna doctrine that led to the formation of Pure Land Buddhism altered the metaphysical and cosmological framework that provided the fundamental

rationale for the notion of *buddhānusmṛti*. That is, rather than recollect and mentally re-create the presence of a past Buddha, the goal became to be reborn in the presence of a contemporaneous Buddha. Though this shift in rationale led to vocal recitation, rather than visualization, being considered the most expedient means to seeing the Buddha, the desire to see and be in the presence of the Buddha appears to be one of the few, if not the only, constants in the changes in meaning represented by *buddhānusmṛti*'s transition to the concepts of *niànfó* and *nenbutsu*. So it is not surprising that visual forms of *buddhānusmṛti*, as well as closely related practices like *guānfó*, continued to be practiced in parallel to vocal recitation.

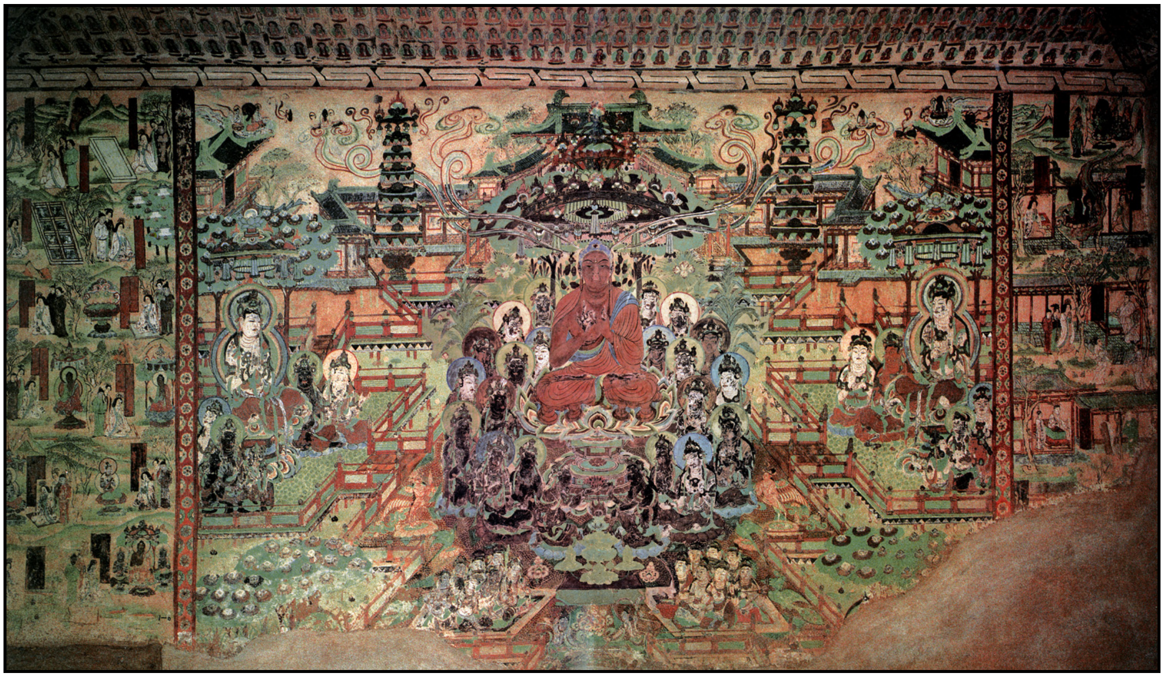


Figure 4: Mural depicting scenes from the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* (see p. viii for image details)



Figure 5:
Detail of Figure 4
This mural depicts Amitābha Buddha in Sukhāvatī surrounded by his attendant bodhisattvas and followers who have been reborn there with him. Depictions of the sixteen contemplations of the Pure Land (see Appendix B) and the narrative events of the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* are painted in the far left and right vertical panels (see above, "Figure 4").

CONCLUSION

The absence of the Buddha after his *parinirvāṇa* was a paramount concern for the early Buddhist community. This fact has been well illustrated by many of the sources cited in this study. The natural concomitant to this distress over the absence of the Buddha was a profound concern with the nature of the Buddha's presence. Vision, because it is predicated on presence, at least according to the literal sense of the word, is a particularly useful object of study for ascertaining what people think and believe about an object's presence.

Despite the fact that early Buddhist attitudes toward seeing the Buddha were informed by Indian notions of seeing that had a strong devotional component, such as *darśana* and *bhakti*, the earliest Buddhist scriptural evidence consistently maintains a careful distinction between understanding seeing the Buddha in terms of seeing his bodily form, and seeing the Buddha in terms of the dharma. Regardless of how one understands the meaning of "seeing the dharma," the pervasiveness and persistence of this distinction in the Buddhist literature indicates that, at the very least, we need to be cautious not to interpret ostensibly devotional forms of seeing in Buddhism as being directed toward the Buddha as a physical, historical being. Rather, if seeing the Buddha is an act of devotion,

it should be understood as being directed toward the universal truth as it is expressed in the Buddha's teachings.

This understanding of seeing the Buddha is indicative of the understanding of the nature of the Buddha that was foundational to the development of the Mahāyāna tradition. We've seen that many of the doctrinal developments discussed in this study, including that of Buddha recollection (*buddhānusmṛti*) and the three-body (*trikāya*) theory, are originally centered on the systematic identification of the Buddha with his abstract qualities of perfect knowledge and morality, as found in early lists of epithets for the Buddha. The Buddha's ethical perfection was understood to be manifest in series of thirty-two major and eighty minor bodily marks, and it is probably for this reason that seeing the Buddha is so closely associated with penitence and the expiation of karmic defilements. The attainment of a vision of the Buddha in meditation, for example, almost invariably is said to result in, or else be the product of, the elimination of karmic hindrances.

As the "real" body of the Buddha (*dharmakāya*) came to be increasingly identified with the universal nature of all dharmas in a state of "suchness" or "thusness" that is beyond perception or cognition, all manifest forms of the Buddha (*nirmāṇakāya*), including the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, came to be considered emanations of this essential body. As a result, the Buddha came to be understood in terms of a totally abstract state of perfection, any visible manifestations of which are to be understood only as signs of this perfection.

I think it is for this reason that icons, as idealized representations of the Buddha, are not susceptible to the same stigmatization as the human body (*rūpakāya*) of the Buddha, even though they, like the human body, are mere physical forms. Despite long-standing assumptions to the contrary, we've seen that there is little positive evidence to indicate that there was an early prohibition or convention that disallowed the production of Buddha images. On the contrary, images of the Buddha came to be thought of as responsible for carrying on the Buddha's work of converting heretics and leading people to enlightenment. Icons, through their ritual consecration, are thought to embody the living presence of the Buddha. And icons, in addition to not being subject to the same defilement and decay as the human body, are also not susceptible to the same conceptual or doctrinal misunderstandings because they represent highly formalized and conventionalized systems of signs referring to the perfection of the Buddha.

During their present life, the soteriologically optimal way for the Buddhist faithful to see the Buddha after the death of Śākyamuni, however, is through meditative visualization. This led the concept of "Buddha recollection" (*buddhānusmṛti*), which was originally based on the abstract epithets describing the perfect qualities of the Buddha, to become increasingly construed in terms of visualization. This concept of "Buddha recollection" as visualization was both supported by, and, in the case of Pure Land Buddhism, eventually undermined by the Mahāyāna belief in the existence of multiple contemporaneous Buddhas. Through visualization it was believed that the meditater could immediately come to be in the presence of the Buddha, or Buddhas. In the Pure Land tradition, however, such strenuous meditative practices as visualization of the

Buddha were considered too difficult for people during the degenerate age of the Buddhist law. Instead, for Pure Land Buddhists it was generally considered more efficacious to rely on the saving power of Amitābha and trust in his vow to bring all sentient beings to enlightenment. However, these fundamental changes in religious practice were still inspired by the desire to see and be in the presence of the Buddha.

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APPENDIX A

The Thirty-Two Major Physical Marks of the Buddha

1) Firmly placed feet and an even gait (*supratiṣṭhitapādo mahāpuruṣaḥ samam ākramati*)
2) On the soles of his feet are thousand-spoked wheels with hubs and rims, complete in every aspect (*adhasthāt pādatalayoś cakre jāte sahasrare*)
3) Long fingers (*dīrghāṅgulim*)
4) Broad heels (*ayātapādapr̥ṣṇiḥ*)
5) Hands and feet are soft and delicate (*mr̥dutaruṇapāṇipādaḥ*)
6) Hands and feet are web-like (*jalapāṇipādaḥ*)
7) Ankles are hidden (*uccaṅgacaraṇaḥ*)
8) Legs are like those of an antelope (*aineyajaṅaḥ*)
9) Body does not bend (*anavanātakā*)
10) Penis is sheathed (*kośagata-vastiguhyaḥ*)
11) Body is round, like a banyan tree (*nyagrodhaparimaṇḍalaḥ*)
12) A halo extends as far as his arms can reach (*vyāmaprabhaḥ*)
13) Body hairs point upward (*urdhvaṅgaroma*)
14) Body hairs are separate; each grows in its own pore, and is blue, curled, and turned to the right (*ekaikorama / ekaikam asya romakupa jātaṃ nīlaṃ kuṇḍalakajātaṃ pradakṣiṇavartam*)
15) Skin is golden (*kañcanasannibhatvāk*)
16) Skin is smooth; therefore, dust an dirt do not stick to his body (*ślakṣaṇatvāt tvace rajo malasya kāye nāvatiṣṭhate*)
17) Body has seven protruburences: two on his hands, two on his feet, two on his shoulders, on one on his neck (*saptodsādakāyaḥ / kāye jātaḥ dvau hastayor dvaur pādayor dvav asamyor eko grīvāyām*)
18) Front of the body is like a lion (*simhapūrvādhakāyaḥ*)
19) Torso is well-rounded (*susamvr̥ttaskandhaḥ*)
20) There is no hollow between the shoulders (*citāntarāṃśaḥ*)
21) Body is straight and tall (*bahudr̥jugātraḥ*)

22) Forty even teeth (*catvāriṃśat samadantaḥ*)

23) Teeth have no spaces between them (*avirāladantaḥ*)

24) Teeth are very white (*suśukladantaḥ*)

25) Jaw is like a lion's (*simhahānuḥ*)

26) Tongue is long and thin; when stuck out it is able to cover the entire face up to the edge of the hair (*prabhutatanujiḥvaḥ / prabhutatvāj jiḥvāyāḥ mukhāj jiḥvaṃ nirnamya sarvamukhamaṇḍalam avacchādayati yāvantakaṃ keśaparyantam*)

27) Excellent sense of taste (*rasarasāgraprāptaḥ*)

28) Voice is like Brahma's; it speaks as delightfully as a Kalaviṅka bird's (*brahmasvaraḥ kalaviṅkamanojñābhāni*)

29) Voice is like the sound of a magical drum (*dundubhīśvara-nirghoṣaḥ*)

30) Eyes are intensely blue, and the eyelashes are like a cow's (*abhinīlanetraḥ gopakṣamaḥ*)

31) Head is like a turban (*uṣṇiṣaśīrṣa*)

32) Hair growing between the eyebrows is white, soft, and turned to the right (*ūrṇa cāsya bhrūvor madhye jāta svetā saṅkhanibhā pradakṣiṇavartā*)

Source: Griffiths, *On Being Buddha*, 99-100 (cited from the *Bodhisattvabhūmiḥ*).

Appendix B

The Sixteen Contemplations of the *Guān Wúliàngshòu jīng* (觀無量壽經)

1) Contemplation of the sun* (*rìxiǎng guān* 日想觀) in the west, the direction of Jílè shìjiè (極樂世界; Sanskrit: Sukhāvatī)

2) Contemplation of the clear water (*shuǐxiǎng guān* 水想觀) in the west

3) Contemplation of the ground (*dìxiǎng guān* 地想觀) of Jílè shìjiè

4) Contemplation of the jeweled trees (*bǎoshù guān* 寶樹觀) of Jílè shìjiè

5) Contemplation of the "treasure-ponds" (*bǎochí guān* 寶池觀) of Jílè shìjiè

6) Contemplation of the "treasure-pavilions" (*bǎolóu guān* 寶樓觀) and various other objects in Jílè shìjiè

7) Contemplation of the "lotus-throne" (*huázuò guān* 華座觀) of Āmítuófó (阿彌陀佛; Sanskrit: Buddha Amitābha)

8) Contemplation of the Image of Āmítuófó (*xiàng guān* 像觀), and those of his attendant bodhisattvas, Guānyīn (觀音; Sanskrit: Avalokiteśvara) and Dàshìzhì (大勢至; Sanskrit: Mahāsthāmaprāpta)

9) Contemplation of the true body of Āmítuófó (*zhēnshēn guān* 眞身觀), including his thirty-two physical marks, boundless light, etc.

10) Contemplation of Guānyīn (*Guānyīn guān* 觀音觀), individually

11) Contemplation of Dàshìzhì (*Dàshìzhì guān* 大勢至觀), individually

12) "General Contemplation" (*pǔ guān* 普觀) of one's own rebirth in Jílè shìjiè and the pleasures experienced there

13) "Miscellaneous Contemplation" (*záxiǎng guān* 雜想觀) of a sixteen-foot tall image of Āmítuófó, and images of his attendant bodhisattvas

14) Contemplation of the three ranks of rebirth of the higher level (*shàngbèi guān* 上輩觀)

15) Contemplation of the three ranks of rebirth of the middle level (*zhōngbèi guān* 中輩觀)

16) Contemplation of the three ranks of rebirth of the lower level (*xiàbèi guān* 下輩觀)

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* The first four contemplations represent contemplation of the four essential elements in Buddhist and Indian metaphysics: fire, water, earth and wood.

Sources: Andrews, "Nembutsu in the Chinese Pure Land Tradition," 28-29; *Buddhist Door: Buddhist Dictionary*, s.v. "十六觀"; Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 323-39, 371.

APPENDIX C

Multilingual Glossary

Key: **S** – Sanskrit; **P** – Pāli; **C** – Chinese; **J** – Japanese; **E** – English

Note: The terms below are organized by chapter, and listed in the order that they appear in the text. Though no attempt has been made to account for all of the variant Chinese translations of Sanskrit terms, which can be quite numerous (see, for example, Soothill and Hodous. *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*), I have done my best to identify the translations that have become standard in Buddhist discourse and scholarship. In cases where no Pāli translation is listed, either no equivalent Pāli term was found, or the word is the same in both Pāli and Sanskrit. Unless otherwise indicated, the written form in Japanese is the same as the Chinese. For the sources used to compile this glossary, see the Buddhist dictionaries listed in the "References" section of the bibliography.

Introduction

S: Śākyamuni Buddha **C**: Shìjiāmóunífó (釋迦牟尼佛) **J**: Shakamunibutsu (釈迦牟尼仏)

S: Mahāyāna **C**: Dàchéng (大乘 *or* 大乗) **J**: Daijō **E**: (lit: "great vehicle")

S: Jambudvīpa **P**: Jambudīpa **C**: Nán Shànbùzhōu *or* Nán Yánfútí (南贍部洲 *or* 南閻浮提) **J**: Nan Senbushū *or* Nan Enbudai

S: Amitābha Buddha **C**: Āmítuófó (阿彌陀佛 *or* 阿弥陀佛) **J**: Amidabutsu (阿彌陀仏 *or* 阿弥陀仏)

S: Sukhāvatī **C**: Jílè shìjiè *or* Ānlè guó (極樂世界 *or* 安樂國) [virtually synonymous with *Jìngtǔ* (浄土) in the later Chinese Pure Land tradition; see below under Chapter 4] **J**: Gokuraku sekai *or* Anraku koku (極楽世界 *or* 安楽国) **E**: Pure Land (of Buddha Amitābha)

S: Maitreya **P**: Metteya **C**: Mílè (彌勒 *or* 弥勒) **J**: Miroku

Chapter 1

S: Samyuktaāgama P: Saṃyuttanikāya **C**: Zá āhán jīng (雜阿含經) J: Zō agon kyō (雑阿含経) **E**: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha"

S: Śrāvastī **P**: Sāvatthi **C**: Shīluóbátí (尸羅跋提) **J**: Shirabadai

S: bodhyaṅga **P**: bojjhaṅga **C**: qī juézhī (七覺支) **J**: shichi kakushi (七覚支) **E**: seven limbs of enlightenment

S: Vakkali **C**: Bájiālí (跋迦梨) **J**: Vākkari

S: dharma **P**: dhamma **C**: fǎ (法) **J**: hō **E**: Buddhist law, truth

S: nirvāṇa **P**: nibbāna **C**: nièpán (涅槃) **J**: nehan **E**: enlightenment, extinction

S: Buddhaghoṣa **P**: Buddhaghosa **C**: Fómíng (佛鳴) **J**: Butsumyō

S: sūtra **P**: sutta **C**: jīng (經) **J**: kyō (経) **E**: sacred text, scripture

S: śūnyatā **P**: suññattā **C**: shùnruòduō (舜若多) **J**: shunnyata **E**: emptiness

S: Subhūti **C**: Xūpútí (須菩提) **J**: Shubodai

S: Utpalavarṇā **P**: Uppalavaṇṇā **C**: Liánhuásè (蓮華色) **J**: Rengeshiki

S: Trāyastriṃśa **P**: Tāvatiṃsa **C**: Dāolìtiān (忉利天) **J**: Tōriten E: “Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods”

S: Abhidharma **P**: Abhidhamma **C**: Āpídámó (阿毘達磨) **J**: Abidatsuma

S: Mahāmāyā **C**: Móhēmóyé (摩訶摩耶) **J**: Makamaya (摩迦摩耶)

C: Fǎxiǎn (法顯) **J**: Hokken

C: Xuánzàng (玄奘) **J**: Genjō

S: Sāṅkāśya **P**: Sankassa **C**: Sēngjiāshě *or* Sēngjiāshī (僧迦舍 *or* 僧伽施) **J**: Sōkasha *or* Sōgase

S: cakravartin **P**: cakkavatti **C**: zhuǎnlún wáng (転輪王) **J**: tenrin ō **E**: supreme monarch, wheel-turning monarch

S: dharmakāya **C**: fǎshēn (法身) **J**: hosshin **E**: truth body, cosmic body (of the Buddha)

S: Prasenajit **P**: Pasenadi **C**: Bōsīnì (波斯匿) **J**: Hashinoku

S: Jetavana **C**: Qíyuánjīngshě (祇園精舍) **J**: Gionshōja

S: parinirvāṇa **P**: parinibbāna **C**: bānnièpán (般涅槃) **J**: hatsunehan **E**: final or ultimate enlightenment or extinction

S: Udāyana **P**: Udena **C**: Yōutián (優塡) **J**: Uden

S: Kosambī **P**: Kauśāmbī **C**: Jūshǎnmí (拘睒彌 *or* 拘睒弥) **J**: Kusenmi

S: Maudgalyāyana **P**: Moggallāna **C**: Mùlián (目連) J: Mokuren

C: Guānfó sānmèi hǎi jīng (觀佛三昧海經) **J**: Kanbutsu zanmai kai kyō (観仏三昧海経) **E**: “Sūtra on the Ocean-like Meditation of Buddha Visualization” [**S**: *Buddhadhyānasamādhi-sāgarasūtra]

S: Śāriputra **P**: Sāriputta **C**: Shèlìfú (舍利弗) **J**: Sharihotsu

S: Nagarahāra **C**: Nàjiēluóhé (那揭羅曷) **J**: Nagarahāra (那揭羅曷, *also* ナガラハーラ)

S: bodhisattva **P**: bodhisatta **C**: púsà *or* pútísàduǒ (菩薩 *or* 菩提薩埵) **J**: bosatsu *or* bodaisatta

S: Vajrapāṇi **C**: Jīngāngshǒu (金剛手) **J**: Kongōshu

S: Gṛdhrakūṭa **P**: Gijjhakāta **C**: Jiùshān (鷲山) J: Jusen

S: Kapilavastu **C**: Jiébǐluófásūdǔ (劫比羅伐窣堵) **J**: Kōbirasoto

S: Bhagavan **P**: Bhagavant **C**: Shìzūn (世尊) **J**: Seson **E**: Lord, Master

S: nirmāṇabuddha **C**: huàfó (化佛) **J**: kebutsu (化仏) **E**: emanation Buddha

S: nirmāṇakāya **C**: huàshēn (化身) **J**: keshin **E**: manifestation body (of the Buddha)

S: trikāya **C**: sānshēn (三身) **J**: sanshin *or* sanjin **E**: three-bodies (of the Buddha)

C: Dàtáng Dàcíēnsì sānzàng fǎshī zhuán (大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳) **J**: Daitō Daijionji sanzōhōshi den **E**: "Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Cien Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty."

Chapter 2

S: vipaśyanā **P**: vipassanā **C**: guān (觀) **J**: kan (観) **E**: meditative insight into the truth

S: darśana **P**: dassana **C**: jiàn *or* dálíshěnà (見 *or* 達梨舍那) **J**: ken *or* darishana **E**: sight, vision, view

S: darśanamārga: **C**: jiàndào (見道) **J**: kendō **E**: the path of seeing

S: pañcamārga **C**: wǔ dào (五道) **J**: go dō **E**: the five paths

S: vicikitsā **C**: yí (疑) **J**: gi **E**: doubt, uncertainty

S: dṛṣṭi **C**: jiàn *or* dálìsèzhì (見 *or* 達利瑟致) **J**: ken *or* datsurishichi **E**: sight, view, opinion; especially erroneous ones

S: kleśa **C**: fánnǎo (煩惱) **J**: bonnō **E**: defilements, afflictions, vices

S: smṛti **P**: sati **C**: niàn (念) **J**: nen **E**: mindfulness, memory

S: anusmṛti **P**: anussati **C**: suíniàn (隨念) **J**: zuinen **E**: recollection, remembrance

S: bala **C**: lì (力): **J**: chikara **E**: power

S: indriya **C**: gēn (根) **J**: kon **E**: powers, faculties, sense organs

S: āryaaṣṭaṅgamārga **P**: ariyaaṭṭhangikamagga **C**: bā zhèngdào (八正道) **J**: hasshōdō **E**: noble eightfold path

S: smṛtiupasthāna **P**: satipaṭṭhāna **C**: sì niànchù (四念處) **J**: shi nenjo **E**: four applications of mindfulness

S: prajñā **C**: bōrě (般若) **J**: hannya **E**: insight, wisdom

S: bodhipākṣikadharma **C**: sānshíqī zhùdàopǐn (三十七助道品) **J**: sanjūshichi jodōhon **E**: thirty-seven factors of enlightenment

S: Ekottaraāgama **P**: Aṅguttaranikāya **C**: Zēngyī āhán jīng (增一阿含經) **J**: Zōitsu agon kyō (増一阿含経) **E**: "The Numerical Discourses."

S: Mahānāma **C**: Shìmónán (釋摩男) **J**: Shakumanan

S: saṃgha **C**: sēng (僧) **J**: sō **E**: Buddhist community, monastic community

S: śīla **P**: sīla **C**: jiè *or* shīluó (戒 *or* 尸羅) **J**: kai *or* shira **E**: morality, moral precepts

S: deva **C**: típó (提婆) **J**: daiba **E**: god, heavenly spirit

S: dāna **C**: tánnà *or* shī (檀那 *or* 施) **J**: danna *or* se **E**: giving, generosity

S: ānāpāna **C**: ānnàbānnà (安那般那) **J**: annahanna **E**: breathing

S: maraṇa **C**: sǐ (死) **J**: shi **E**: death

S: kāya **C**: shēn (身) **J**: shin **E**: body

S: upasanti **P**: upasama **C**: pòsàdī (破薩堤) **J**: hasatai **E**: calming

Chapter 3

S: Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra **P**: Mahāparinibbānasutta **C**: Dàbān nièpán jīng (大般涅槃經) **J**: Daihatsu nehan gyō (大般涅槃経) **E**: "Sūtra on the Death of the Buddha"

S: Dīrghāgama **P**: Dīghanikāya **C**: Cháng āhán jīng (長阿含經) **J**: Jō agon kyō (長阿含経) **E**: "The Long Discourses of the Buddha"

S: Ānanda **C**: Ānántuó (阿難陀); **J**: Ananda (*also* Ānanda アーナンダ)

S: Tathāgata **C**: rúlái (如來) **J**: nyorai (如来) **E**: (lit: thus come/thus gone) an epithet for the Buddha

S: śarīra; **C**: shèlì (舍利) **J**: shari **E**: bodily relics (of a Buddha or saint)

S: dhāraṇī **C**: tuóluóní (陀羅尼); **J**: darani **E**: incantation, recitation

S: (Emperor) Aśoka **C**: Āyù wáng (阿育王) **J**: Aiku ō

S: Gandhāra **C**: Gāntuóluó (乾陀羅) **J**: Kendara (*also* Gandāra ガンダーラ)

S: Mathurā **C**: Mótōuluó (摩偷羅) **J**: Matōra (マトゥラ)

S: bhakti **C**: jìng (敬) **J**: kei **E**: reverence, respect

S: nāga **C**: lóng (龍) **J**: ryū (竜) **E**: serpentine water spirits

S: yakṣa **C**: yàochā (藥叉); **J**: yakusha **E**: nature spirits (in Indian religious tradition)

S: śraddhā **P**: saddhā **C**: xìn (信) **J**: shin **E**: faith, trust

Chapter 4

S: buddhadarśana **C**: jiànfó (見佛) **J**: kenbutsu (見仏) **E**: seeing the Buddha

S: buddhānusmṛti **P**: buddhānussati **C**: niànfó (念佛) **J**: nenbutsu (念仏) **E**: Buddha recollection

S: arhat **P**: arahant **C**: āluóhàn (阿羅漢) **J**: arakan **E**: worthy one, enlightened being

S: Visuddhimagga **C**: Qīngjìngdào lùn (清浄道論) **J**: Seijōdō ron **E**: "The Path of Purification"

C: Jiětuōdào lún (解脱道論) **J**: Gedatsudō ron **E**: “The Path of Freedom” [**P**: *Vimuttimagga]

S: yogin **C**: yújiā qí (瑜伽祇) **J**: yuga gi **E**: practitioner of yoga or meditation

S: Samādhirājasūtra *or* Candrapradīpasūtra **C**: Yuèdēng sānmèi jīng (月燈三昧經) **J**: Gattō zanmai kyō (月灯三昧経) **E**: “The King of Meditation Sūtra” (Sanskrit version) *or* “Moonlight Meditation Sūtra” (Chinese version)

S: ākāra **C**: zuòtài (作態) [**J**: sakutei ?] **E**: appearance

S: nimitta **C**: xiàng (相) **J**: sō **E**: image, aspect

C: guānfó (觀佛) **J**: kanbutsu (観仏) **E**: Buddha contemplation

S: śamatha **P**: samatha **C**: shēmótā (奢摩他) **J**: shamata **E**: calming

C: Guān wúliàngshòu jīng (觀無量壽經) **J**: Kan muryōju kyō (観無量寿経) **E**: “Sūtra on the Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life (Amitābha/Amitāyus)” [**S**: *Amitāyurdhyānasūtra]

C: xiǎng (想) **J**: sō **E**: think, imagine, believe, suppose, miss, wish, remember

C: guānniàn (觀念) **J**: kannen (観念) **E**: contemplation, recollection

S: samyaksambuddha **C**: zhèngbiànzhī (正遍知) **J**: shōhenchi **E**: fully and completely awakened Buddha

S: pratyekabuddha **P**: paccekabuddha **C**: pìzhīfó (辟支佛) **J**: byakushibutsu (辟支仏) **E**: private or solitary Buddha

S: lakṣaṇa **C**: xiàng (相) **J**: sō **E**: mark, sign

S: anuvyañjana **C**: suíhào (隨好) **J**: zuikō **E**: minor marks (of a great man)

S: mahāpuruṣa **P**: mahāpurisa C: dàshì (大士) **J**: daishi **E**: great man

S: Sarvāstivāda **P**: Sabbatthivāda **C**: Shuōyīqièyǒu bù (說一切有部) **J**: Setsuissaiu bu (説一切有部)

S: Vibhāṣā C: Pípóshā (毘婆沙) **J**: Bibasha **E**: “Compendium (of the Sarvāstivāda)”

C: Bānzhōu sānmèi jīng (般舟三昧經) **J**: Hanju zanmai kyō (般舟三昧経) **E**: “Sūtra on the Meditation on Being in the Presence of All Buddhas” [**S**: *Pratyutpannabuddha-saṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra]

S: buddhānusmṛtisamādhi **C**: niànfó sānmèi (念佛三昧) **J**: nenbutsu zanmai (念仏三昧) **E**: Buddha recollection meditation

S: gati **C**: qù (趣) **J**: shu **E**: realm of rebirth (in Buddhist cosmology)

S: Siddhārtha (Gautama) **P**: Siddhattha (Gotama) **C**: Xīdáduō (悉達多) **J**: Shiddatta

S: Mahāsāṃghika **C**: Dàzhòng bù (大衆部) **J**: Daishu bu

S: rūpakāya **C**: sèshēn (色身) **J**: shikishin **E**: physical or form body (of the Buddha)

S: Yogācāra **C**: Wéishí zōng *or* Fǎxiàng zōng (唯識宗 *or* 法相宗) **J**: Yuishiki shū or Hossō shū **E**: “Conciousness-only School”

S: Lokakṣema **C**: Zhīlóujiāchèn (支婁迦讖) **J**: Shirukasen

S: Buddhakāya **C**: Fóshēn (佛身) **J**: Busshin (仏身) **E**: body of the Buddha

S: tathatā **C**: rú (如) **J**: nyo **E**: suchness

S: pratītyasamutpāda **P**: paṭiccasamuppāda **C**: yuánqǐfǎ (緣起法) **J**: engihō (縁起法) **E**: dependent origination

S: Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra **C**: Bāqiān sòng bōrě bōluómì duō jīng (八千頌般若波羅蜜多經) **J**: Hassen ju hannya haramitta kyō (八千頌般若波羅蜜多経) **E**: "Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses"

S: prajñāpāramitā **C**: Bōrě bōluómìduō (般若波羅蜜多) **J**: hannya haramitta **E**: "Perfection of Wisdom"

C: Jīngāng bōrě jīng (金剛般若經) **J**: Kongō hannya kyō **E**: "Diamond Sūtra"

S: rūpa **C**: sè (色) **J**: shiki **E**: form

S: sahā **C**: suōpó (娑婆) **J**: shaba *or* saba **E**: this corrupt or defiled world

S: Dharmarakṣa **C**: Zhútánmóluóchá *or* Zhúfǎhù (竺曇摩羅察 *or* 竺法護) **J**: Chikutanmarasa *or* Jikuhōgo

C: Rúlái xīngxiǎn jīng (如來興顯經) **J**: Nyorai kōken kyō (如来興顕経) **E**: "Sūtra on the Appearance of the Tathāgata"

S: ṛddhi **P**: iddhi **C**: rúyìshēn (如意身) **J**: nyoijin E: supernatural power

S: dhyāna **P**: jhāna **C**: chán (禪) **J**: zen (禅) **E**: meditation

S: manomayakāya **C**: yìshēngshēn (意生身) **J**: ishōshin **E**: mind-made body

S: saṃbhogakāya **C**: bàoshēn (報身) **J**: hōshin **E**: reward body (of the Buddha)

S: Mahāyānasūtralaṃkāra C: Dàshèng zhuāngyán jīng lùn (大乘莊嚴經論) J: Daijō shōgon kyō ron (大乗荘厳経論) E: "Universal Vehicle Discourse Literature"

S: lokadhātu **C**: shìjiān (世間) **J**: seken **E**: world

S: buddhakṣetra **C**: fóguótǔ (佛國土) **J**: bukkokudo (仏国土) **E**: buddha land

C: Jìngtǔ (浄土) **J**: Jōdo **E**: "Pure Land"

S: vṛtti **C:** yòng (用) **J**: yō **E**: function, use

S: śāstra **C**: lùn (論) **J**: ron **E**: commentary, treatise

Chapter 5

C: Lúshān Huìyuǎn (廬山慧遠) **J**: Rosan Eon **E**: "Hui Yuan of Mt. Lu"

S: Lokeśvararāja **C**: Shìzìzài wáng (世自在王) **J**: Seijizai ō

S: Dharmākara **C**: Fǎcáng bǐqiū (法藏比丘) **J**: Hōzō biku (法藏比丘)

S: Nāgārjuna **C**: Lóngshù (龍樹) **J**: Ryūju (竜樹)

C: Shí zhùkūnpóshā lùn (十住昆婆沙論) **J**: Jū jūbibasha ron **E**: "Treatise on the Ten Stages Sūtra" [**S**: *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣāśāstra]

S: avinivartanīya **C**: bùtuì (不退) **J**: futai **E**: state of non-retrogression (on the path to enlightenment)

S: bodhi **C**: pútí *or* jué (菩提 *or* 覺) **J**: bodai *or* kaku (覚) **E**: awakening, enlightenment

S: anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi **C**: wúshàngzhèngděngzhèngjué (無上正等正覺) **J**: mujōshōtōshōgaku (無上正等正覚) **E**: unsurpassed, perfect and complete enlightenment

S: Vasubandhu **C**: Tiānqīn *or* Shìqīn (天親 *or* 世親) **J**: Tenjin *or* Seshin

C: Jìngtǔ lùn (浄土論) **J**: Jōdo ron **E**: "Treatise on the Pure Land"

S: saṃsāra **C**: shēngsǐ (生死) **J**: seishi **E**: the cycle of death and rebirth (according to Buddhist cosmology)

C: guānchá (觀察) **J**: kansatsu *or* kanzatsu (観察) **E**: observe, contemplate

C: Shàndǎo (善導) **J**: Zendō

C: Tánluán (曇鸞) **J**: Donran

C: Wǎngshēng lùn zhù (往生論註) **J**: Ōjō ron shū **E**: "Commentary to the Treatise on the Pure Land"

C: xìnxīn (信心) **J**: shinjin **E**: faith, trust

C: tālì (他力) **J**: tariki **E**: "other-power"

C: zìlì (自力) **J**: jiriki **E**: "self-power"

C: Dàochuò (道綽) **J**: Dōshaku

C: mòfǎ (末法) **J**: mappō **E**: the latter or final period of the dharma

S: pañcakaṣāya **C**: wǔ zhuó (五濁) **J**: go joku **E**: the five corruptions

S: pṛthagjana **P**: puthujjana **C**: fánfū (凡夫) **J**: bonpu *or* bonbu **E**: ordinary people (who have not advanced on the path to Buddhist enlightenment)

C: Guān jīng shū (觀經疏) **J**: Kan gyō sho (観経疏) **E**: "(Shandao's) Commentary on the *Guan* (*Wuliangshou*) *jing*"

C: wǔ zhèngxìng (五正行) **J**: go shōgyō **E**: five right practices

C: záxìng (雜行): **J**: zōgyō (雑行) **E**: miscellaneous practices

C: dúsòng (讀誦) **J**: dokuju **E**: to real aloud (the sūtras)

C: chēngmíng (稱名) **J**: shyōmyō (称名 *or* 唱名) **E**: to chant the name (of the Buddha)

J: Hōnen (法然)

J: *Senchaku shū* (選択集); **E**: "Passages on the Selection of the Original Vow (of Amitābha Buddha)"

C: Lóngmén shíkū (龍門石窟) **J**: Ryūmon sekkutsu (竜門石窟) **E**: Longmen grottoes

C: sànshàn 散善 **J**: sanzen **E**: "non-meditative (lit: scattered, dispersed) good (practices)"

C: dìngshàn 定善 **J**: jōzen **E**: "meditative (lit: fixed, determined) good (practices)"

J: Genshin (源信)

J: Ōjōyōshū (往生要集) **E**: "Essential Passages on Rebirth (in the Pure Land)"

J: bessō kan (別相觀) **E**: Buddha-mark contemplation

J: sōsō kan (總相觀) **E**: general Buddha contemplation

J: ji kan (事觀) **E**: contemplation of the Buddha's appearance

J: ri kan (理觀) **E**: contemplation of the Buddha's true nature

J: zōryaku kan (雜略觀) **E**: simplified Buddha contemplation